Agency in Garden Imagery: A Painterly Investigation into Thresholds of Otherness

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This thesis contains no material, which has been accepted, for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, it incorporates no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgment is made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

This studio-based investigation explores traditional representations of gardens in order to create an alternative way of perceiving cultivated space. This thesis presents a way of perceiving "otherness" in garden imagery through the materiality, colour and agency of paint. The works offer an alternative visual conception of tensions between gender, identity, power, agency and authority.

The studio practice examines pictorial devices of the imperial vista, diagrammatical mapping, encompassing narrative, framing portals, surfaces tension and compositional axis. These devices are utilised to engage with the notion of boundary and threshold, where they disintegrate and become suggestive of something other. This framework is examined through political, cultural and gendered power relationships, and contextualised through the writings of W.T.J. Mitchell, Martin Jay and Martin Warnke. The garden construct is argued as a form of cultivated landscape; Mitchell argues landscape as an instrument of cultural power and Warnke argues all landscape is political, identifying structures and boundaries as symbols of power. Jay aligns the act of gardening with violence, as a site of conflict between natural force and human control. The concept of the threshold of otherness is drawn from the ideas of Emma Cocker, Marc Treib and David Batchelor. Cocker discusses otherness in the context of the threshold of the untameable and unexpected in creative practice. Treib identifies the delicate agreement which arises between seemingly conflicting landscape modes as a form of otherness, whereas Batchelor sees the potency of colour with its cultural bias as a form of otherness.

Underpinning this research is the Foucauldian convention of power, where the convention of painting is examined as an operation of *power over* (authority) and *power to* (agency) and this is argued both pictorially and relationally, that being the experience of the painting as object in a gallery space. Typically, vistas, control, vantage points, colonialism and the politics of assigning otherness all resonate with the operation of *power over*, whilst a more immersive, visceral, un-prescribed engagement aligns with *power to*. In the project, the tension between agency and authority is represented through wildness. Wildness in garden constructs is the ever-resourceful life force of nature, which aligns with the alchemy of paint, through viscosity,

fluidity, pigmentation and flexibility. Wildness is contextualised within the writings of Emma Marris, who discusses wildness within national parks and gardens; Rebecca Solnit, who discusses wildness in the context of resistance to control; and Richard Mabey, who looks at wildness in the context of weeds and cultivation.

The utopian ideal of the Garden of Eden has been a pivotal influence in understanding garden imagery, in both aesthetics and attitudes. This utopian ideal led to the identification of authority and agency as key forces, traditionally seen as two divisions or binaries within garden structures, but in this project reconciled as a state of productive tension. This tension is seemingly opposite but not independent or isolated from each other; in their most dynamic form they operate in dualism, in a complementary state, creating a visual charge by simultaneously attracting and repelling.

Four visual themes are carried through the final suite of work: otherness, control, agency and oscillations. These themes have been defined and contextualised through a number of key artistic works. Marc Quinn's macro psychedelic flower painting is used as an example of otherness. Fiona Lowry's muted, pattern-like landscape pulsates with restraint and is therefore argued within a framework of control, and Cecily Brown's suspended gestural energy in a suite of works that denotes garden motifs is discussed in relationship to the agency of paint. Additionally, Bahar Behbahani presents a complex work of the Persian garden which is examined as an exemplar of oscillation, with layers of poetic narrative and veiling abstraction. Embedded in the strategies of narrative and veiling are the issues of identity and gender.

The contribution of this research project to the field is the offer of another way of seeing and engaging with garden imagery. This vision is presented as one that comes from standing within. Rather than a scene or picture, this vision is embedded and grounded, elemental and basic. It acknowledges the historical, cultural, gendered and political ways of seeing a vista and the power positions in garden imagery. This thesis steps outside these traditional notions and presents a way of looking that embodies a relationship to potency and potentiality, a threshold position that is never fixed or static but one that evokes a poetic sense of renewal and regeneration.

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Introduction

Agency in Garden Imagery: A Painterly Investigation into Thresholds of Otherness is a studio-based investigation which explores garden representations in order to find a new way of seeing and experiencing garden imagery. This studio-based project examines our relationship with garden imagery by interrogating a range of different formats and structures to give both a historical and a contemporary view of key issues that are assumed, seen and experienced within garden imagery. These representations are political, gendered, and cultured. Four visual themes of otherness, control, agency and oscillations are defined and contextualised through a number of key artistic works; this forms the analytical and methodological framework that was carried through the final suite of painted works.

The project's aim was to develop garden imagery that engendered a new way of seeing: one that it is embedded, experiential.

The project emerged as a response to three research questions:

> How are issues such as control and authority used in garden imagery?
>
> How is the relationship of nature-culture informed within contemporary garden imagery?
>
> How can garden imagery, through the language of paint, use the traits of otherness to present a new way of being that is experiential and embedded?

The research questions were formulated as my contextual and studio experimentation developed in tandem, and set the focus and the scope of the research.

In the first part of the project I introduced three key related areas that define what a garden is. In defining the garden, I focused on the Garden of Eden as the great exemplar that has

influenced imagery, and has also dominated Western thinking about how we perceive a garden. Within the Garden of Eden story, ideas of politics, gender, culture are implicit.

In analysing the Eden story and the resulting range of utopian images, I interpret three ideas or themes embedded in the Garden of Eden. The idea of *wildness* as an unattainable, mythological freedom; the motivation of *care*, which I link and analyse as a form of control; and *otherness* as a state of being that sits outside the norm. Otherness evokes alternative spaces and additional norms, that are not necessarily overtly felt or seen, but are implied. This project has prioritised otherness, which became the central driver of this studio-based investigation.

In Chapter 1 I discuss two key styles of garden imagery. I look at how we have traditionally viewed garden imagery by examining the wall paintings of the Villa of Livia, known as *The Garden Room* (ca. 30-20 B.C.E.), and contrast it with Jan Brueghel the Elder's *Garden of Eden* (1612). I introduce the Foucauldian relational convention of power, through which I conduct a formal analysis of two garden images, identifying *power over* as a form of authority, and *power to* as a mode of agency. *The Garden Room*, I argue, is a political, experiential and evocative utopian space. It has cultural implications as it explores issues that are bigger than the site and space, environmental conditions, food production and security, and is specifically political in its linking prosperity with emperor Augustus.

On the other hand, Jan Brueghel the Elder's *Garden of Eden* depicts an imagined vista. While it still has the same framework and structure as *The Garden Room,* it is composed as an imaginary space, and is heavily founded on the Garden of Eden principles. The image is diagrammatic: we have the classical one-point perspective and vantage points that are intrinsic to our understanding of how gardens and garden imagery are physically structured. This concept of understanding a garden image through experience is developed in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 2 I introduce the example of two great gardens to establish how intrinsically linked the experience of a garden is to how we understand garden imagery. I describe the structures of Kew Gardens and Monet's Garden in Giverny. I analyse garden imagery of these two sites, referring to Martin Warnke's ideas of the politicised landscape and Craig Owens' concepts about representation as a form of power. In my examination of Kew Gardens, with its grand

vistas and defined boundaries, I discuss the authoritarian and colonial power structures that exist within this Imperial structure. This control of vista, structure, the politics of assigning otherness, colonialism and control are all contributing elements in the outworking of *power over.* Monet's Garden in Giverny provides a counterpoint. It provides an embedded experience, as the views do not operate within a framework of vistas and perimeters. This garden is more fluid: the viewer is immersed within the scene. This immersion and agency relate to the operation of *power to.* Immersion denies a simplified structure, and without the classical single-point perspective, an infinite number of vantage points is present. A play and movement of light on the foliage's surfaces becomes the means of structuring Monet's imagery. These are two very different ways of looking at the imagery of gardens: we see power and control in the design of Kew Gardens itself and its portrayal, and the idea of wildness in Monet's Garden and his imagery of it. The painting is a colour field rather than a vista. Wildness in Monet's work is a construct, however, portrayed by ocular effects and his depiction of shallow depth.

Chapter 3 opens with a comparison of two paintings, Berthe Morisot's *Lilacs at Maurecourt* (1874) and Édouard Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1862-1863). Through addressing these works I discuss gardens as gendered sites, and shift focus to contextualise the argument from the historical to the contemporary. I take up the ideas of otherness, control, agency and oscillation, and I analyse these tropes through a range of contemporary art works, isolating them individually and defining them through describing contemporary works of Marc Quinn - *Hyper Nova* (2010), Fiona Lowry – *I act as the tongue of you* (2008), Cecily Brown – *Red Me No Green* (2008), and Bahar Behbahani – *Report to London* (2015-16). None of the tropes I have identified to this point operate in isolation: there is a crossover within each image, which reinforces the idea of the threshold. My studio explorations were informed by analysing the tensions that arise through the interplay of these tropes.

All the tropes identified in the framework of the earlier chapters have underpinned the methodological approach to the research. These tropes are analysed in a range of different structures in the fourth chapter. Within this chapter I reflect on key examples throughout the life of the project and I analyse the way in which these characteristics have unfolded. Principally within the methodology chapter, the analysis is not chronological but focuses on

key examples and significant turning points in the studio research, which centred on the oscillations I was trying to affect in my paintings, to create a visual field that remains unfixed, fluid, and transient.

Defining the garden

> "an enclosure that protects a cultivated area from the wild."
>
> Forbes and Liddle (2015)

In his book *Jardins – Reflections on the Human Condition,* garden and landscape historian and theorist, John Dixon Hunt suggests that there is a universality of understanding about gardens, despite the fact that the singular word 'garden' encompasses, and is suggestive of, innumerable styles, tastes, historical developments, functions and cultural nuances. Dixon Hunt defines a garden simply, stating that it is,

> a relatively small space of ground, usually out of doors, distinguished from the surrounding terrain by some boundary or by its internal organization or by both. A combination of architectural (or hard) and natural (or soft) materials is deployed in gardens for a variety of reasons—practical, social, spiritual, aesthetic—all of which are explicit or implicit expressions of the culture that created them. A garden is the most sophisticated expression of a society's relationship with space and nature (1996, p. 60).

Our instinctual recognition of gardens is, according to Dixon Hunt, not based on the formal language of paths, structures, plantings, boundaries, grottos and water features, nor indeed, on the formal language of pictorial space in the triadic terms of foreground, middle ground and distance. According to Dixon Hunt, the language of Western painting, up until Modernism, dominated the language of landscape architecture (2016b). Our universal understanding, Dixon Hunt posits, "is (an) instinct with the idea of garden – in its delicate fencing, its stepping stones over a marshy stream, and the sounds of waters that we do not see in an image; but above all, by the fact that we have stepped into it, have crossed the threshold that is fundamental to the idea of special places" (2016a, p. 109). Originating from the word to thresh, the process of separating, or to analyse in search for a solution, a threshold is defined as a point of entry, or the tipping point before a reaction (Moore, 2009). Therefore, by inference, there are several entities operating at these special spaces and the threshold is the oscillation of, or, the valley of indecision between these entities.

The notion of threshold in relationship to otherness within garden imagery throughout this research gained momentum as I began to elaborate on visual themes of control and wildness and to interrogate the operation of pictorial devices, the materiality of paint and the symbolic loading of these special places. Additionally, the concepts of care, cultivation, separation and control are all intrinsic to the definition of garden. For millennia, the story of Eden has been interpreted according to a distinction between cultivation and wildness, a reading that reinforces a now outdated anthropocentric paradigm that sees nature and humanity as separate entities (Marris, Emma, 2011). Inherent to this tension between humanity and nature, I argue, is a distinction between authority and agency, and in the following chapters I develop that distinction with reference to a selection of traditional and contemporary works, paying specific attention to the tension developed through the Garden of Eden utopic ideal. For now, I wish to elaborate on the distinction between wild and tame, with reference to traditional and contemporary ideas and the concept of a threshold which both operate in dualism.

Otherness or Alterity

Otherness within visual discourse is a very loaded term. Sandywell's definition in *Dictionary of Visual Discourse: a dialectical lexicon of terms* (2011)[1] expands on the theoretical underpinnings and its implications psychologically, socially, and politically. Although all these readings of otherness are relevant, it is the connection with perception that is most relevant:

> (I)t is not the ego, it is the Other as structure which makes perception possible … how the Other conditions the whole of the perceptual field, the application of the field of the categories of the perceived object and the dimensions of the perceived subject, and finally the distribution of the other people in their particularity in every field.

[1] *L'autre.* 'the other' or otherness (alterity) in general. Alterity is experienced immediately as the universe of alien things or objects. In the social order, it presents itself in the manifold experiences of difference and heterogeneity. In Hegelian and Marxist tradition, otherness is depicted as a source of objectification and estrangement: the anxiety and paranoia when individual Self is faced by an alien world. In Sartrean ontology this is described as the threatening universe opened up by another individual consciousness. Understood as a psychodynamic configuration, the theme of alterity is indebted to the psychoanalytic revisionism of Jacques Lacan (1901-81). The themes of objectification, loss (lack), desire (of/for) the Other, the absent body of the Other, the dialectic of otherness in the mirror stage, the Oedipal scenario, and so forth, have played a central role in the post structural redirection of psychoanalytic research (Sandywell, 2011, p. 446).

In its more political sense, alterity is directly connected with the politics of subordination, oppression and domination. Some have also offered a transcendental definition of alterity, as in the story told by Gilles Deleuze (Sandywell, 2011, p. 446)

> …Even desire, whether it be desire of the subject or desire of the Other, depends on this structure. I do not desire any object except as something expressed by the Other in the mode of the possible; I do not desire anything in the Other except the possible worlds it expresses (Sandywell citing Deleuze, 1984, p. 446).

Sandywell's definition of otherness and its theoretical underpinnings are far reaching and subjective. Consequently, any attempt to use it to analyse garden imagery would be fraught with idiosyncratic bias, so to minimise such bias, I will endeavour to articulate otherness within a Deleuzian other–as–structure ontology. Specifically, in later chapters I examine otherness within painting through colour, light, surface, and figure ground relationships. However, another thread to otherness runs through the formal manifestations of the project, and this is more difficult to define: desire, according to Sandywell is the imagined as "the possible world it expresses"(2011, p. 446). This otherness sits on the threshold of real and imagined, and is completely subjective to the viewer.

Writer-artist Emma Cocker in her article *Moves Towards the Incomprehensible Wild,* discusses the impact of 'wild' on the collaborative work of Dutton and Swindells, and the challenges of trying to orchestrate those experiences in creative practice. This definition of wildness is from a performative art perspective; wildness in culture rather than nature.

> The phrase 'beyond comprehension' is often used pejoratively, as an expression of disbelief or frustration when something cannot be made sense of or appears to lack meaning or rationale. However, there is also an archaic meaning for the term where it describes the condition of limitlessness or the state of being boundless or unrestrained; of something existing beyond one's grasp, beyond capture. The incomprehensible is thus that which fails to communicate or be clearly understood at the same time as that which resists or exceeds existing definition (Cocker, 2011, pp. 2-3).

It is this unnerving definition of wildness, the effect of not quite being able to place or understand, which alludes to a space of 'otherness', the 'spaces of imagination' or 'oasis of reverie'. In this context, a yielding to another power occurs, one that is hard to locate or orchestrate, one where the viewer is on the threshold of perception. For Cocker, "the incomprehensible wild functions as an obstacle or blockage in the smooth flow of what is already recognisable, whilst creating germinal conditions for the possibility of something new or different" (2011, p. 3). What has become apparent is that regardless of its outworking - be it physical, emotional, imagined or esoteric - the agency within garden imagery works outside the boundaries of cultivation by rupturing the familiar.

Gaston Bachelard writes, "as soon as we become motionless, we are elsewhere; we are dreaming in a world that is immense. Indeed, immensity is the movement of motionless man" (Bachelard, 1994, p. 184). Central to Bachelard's theme is the idea of slippage from the tactile into "'the space of elsewhere'; …we are not 'cast into the world,' since we open the world, as it were, by transcending the world seen as it is, or as it was, before we started dreaming" (Bachelard, 1994, p. 184). Using the natural world, more specifically, the forest, Bachelard examines spatial and psychological shifts as "going deeper" into the nature experience, but is reluctant to label the experience he describes through the syntax of depth and perception.

> One feels that there is something else to be expressed besides what is offered for objective expression. What should be expressed is hidden grandeur, depth. And so far from indulging in prolixity of expression, or losing oneself in the detail of light and shade, one feels that one is in the presence an "essential" impression seeking expression (Bachelard, 1994, p. 186).

Reinforcing this idea that gardens are places to cultivate sensual depth, experienced through sight, smell, touch, sound and taste, Robert Harrison writes that the creation of gardens goes beyond our fundamental urge to beautify and to engage in creative expression. He points out that gardens have an additional poetic urge.

> One of these urges has to do with creating a pocket of repose in the midst of turbulence, a "still point of the turning world," to borrow a phrase from T. S. Eliot (Harrison, 2008, p. 42).

The 'hospitality of reverie' that gardens offer is significant from the artist's perspective. Within the familiarity of the painting process, opportunities can arise for this 'space of creativity', where the agency of the artist shifts from rendering and describing the 'familiar' to a visceral response to the 'wildness' of materiality. This is an opening or portal to 'the other'. These moments align with what Treib describes, when the natural is in "simultaneous juxtaposition with the constructed" which "leads to a feeling or an aesthetic presence that is different from, and usually greater than, the presence of either of these others existing in isolation" (1979, p. 29).

Care – the motivation for taming the wild

In a garden, human control over nature is manifest in the visual and physical management of plants and landscape; plant selection, pruning, weeding, defining borders and boundaries are

all acts of cultivation used to structure a desired aesthetic. Early in the project I labelled the characteristic of control as care. The idea of care was derived from my own gardening experience and the influence of Harrison's book *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition* (2008). Harrison argues that the motivation of care is a critical driver for humanity in its relationship with the garden. However, there are many meanings of care: some suggest upkeep, maintenance, caution, provision, possession, concern, worry or oversight. Through more extensive reading, I came to see control as a central principle of gardening, at least as important as care, through the conscious determination within gardening processes towards aesthetic outcomes. Care can be interpreted as tentative, subjective or even passive action, whereas control, although it may encompass care, is an act that is more assertive and intentional. In this introduction, I outline these general concerns, from which the research direction emerged.

Harrison introduces the idea that the gardener's "vocation of care" (2008, p. xi) is a key force of humanity, citing two ancient texts, Homer's *Odysseus* and the Bible. In *Odysseus,* Homer aligns the vocation of care with our relationship with the soil, and refers to the parable of the deity, Care, who shaped the first human out of clay. This forecasts our predisposition to be givers of care when handling *humus* (earth) (Heidegger 1962 cited in Harrison, 2008). The Bible references Eden, where God put man in the garden to "work it and take care of it" (Genesis, 2:15): here is humanity's original job description.

Harrison posits that care is core to what it is to be human. He privileges the idea of gardeners as inducers of care, and contributors to a good life, cultivating virtue through the idea of empathy and co-dependence. This vocation of care facilitates a sense of wellbeing; within the process of nurturing the soil a self or internal care also is developed (Harrison, 2008). David E. Cooper's *A Philosophy of Gardens* makes a similar point, arguing that gardens not only cultivate a sense of virtue and happiness, but also bring a sense of belonging, safety and refuge (2006). The garden provides an area of hospitality, an encompassing area of safety which facilitates a musing of character through embodied interaction with that space. Cooper says that it is from this platform of familiarity and flux that the garden's hospitality offers triggers to "the more 'cerebral' or 'internal' garden practices… those of contemplation, imagination, meditation, memory"(2006, pp. 82-83).

These observations align with Bachelard's thoughts in *The Poetics of Space,* where he muses on the relationship between intimate space and exterior space. Bachelard quotes the poetry of Rilke to expand on the idea that familiarity provides room for fresh insight and expansion of intimate space. Somehow this intimate space acts as a threshold where the imagined and wildness from deep within can percolate, bypassing the filters of reason.

> These trees are magnificent, but even more magnificent is the sublime and moving space between them, as though with their growth it too increased (Bachelard, 1994, p. 201) [2].

Gardens facilitate reverie, a safe place where one can feel one is in nature but not threatened by it, in essence a controlled wildness. They provide a space in which the mind becomes more sensitive or attuned whilst engaged with the mundane. Cooper points out that in defining the garden as site, there must be an acknowledgement of what humans do in the site: it is a space of hospitality, an in-between place, a mediating between 'artefact and wildness' referring to 'ordinary' gardens rather than 'great' gardens. The garden becomes an extension of a domestic space, it has a comfortable familiarity of being home but at the same time it sits outside of full control. External factors like insects and the weather disrupt this hospitality, introducing a vulnerability and heightened awareness of the transience of the space; light, atmosphere, temperature. Additionally, the garden provides a platform for solitude and moments of privacy. In familiarity and safety, one is able to forget one's self. "The space of elsewhere" or otherness, in which a sense of safety and predictability is felt allows defences to be disarmed, thus allowing contemplation of the internal, imagined garden. (Bachelard cited in Cooper, 2006, p. 83)

A garden is a "surrounding space, not an open space" (Scruton cited in Cooper, 2006, p. 77). Although public gardens can be expansive, it is this relationship with the immediate that prevails in a garden experience; not the grand vistas of landscape but intimate spaces of discovery - flashes of colour, heady scents and surprising contrasts of form and texture. This observation refers to the viewer's experience of space rather than the topography or design. The arrangement of the elements are all relative to each other and the viewer (Cooper, 2006).

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[2] Bachelard prefaces this quote by saying it came from "a letter reproduced in Claire Goll's very human little book, *Rilke et les femmes.*

This spatial relationship to the body and the ordering of the elements is what Treib describes as "a way of reaching homeostasis in the environment" (1979, p. 32); an act of domestication, making oneself comfortable. In this surrounding comfortable space, a sensitivity to 'the other' is enhanced.

Dixon Hunt emphasises how influential the Garden of Eden has been on the human psyche in determining what a garden is and what it is not. The very first garden – whether it is considered as mythological or as a historical site – was Paradise, the biblical Garden of Eden. Dixon Hunt suggests that at precisely the moment humans were banished they realised two things: "first that it was indeed a garden, while before it had been only a place they knew, just an unexceptional place, full of animals and plants that they presumably thought were routine. Second, they discovered the *idea* of a garden: simply by being thrust from Eden into a hostile and alien world, they needed to work the land for survival and had to strive" (Dixon Hunt, 2016a, p. 108).

The idea of two "great divisions" or binary characteristics within the garden context dates back to the ancient Greek philosopher Theophrastus in his *De causis plantarum* (*On the Causes of Plants*). Theophrastus describes the contrast between the "spontaneous phenomena belonging to the plant or to the country, and 'phenomena initiated by human art, which either helps the nature of the plant achieve its goal or goes beyond it'" (Theophrastus cited in Forbes & Liddle, 2015, p. 21). "Essentially, Theophrastus distinguishes the natural expression of a plant's genotype (the nature of the plant) in its natural environment (the nature of country) from the cultivated expression resulting from human art or intervention (presumably including enclosure)" (Forbes & Liddle, 2015, p. 21). Theophrastus says that the wildness in plants can go beyond our expectation when nurtured in a cultivated space because when plants are given optimum conditions they evolve beyond natural constraints, and generate new forms. At face value, the idea of wildness within a cultivated construct such as a garden appears incompatible; however, even within ancient thinking, human cultivation was not seen as counter to the force of nature, and certainly today this position has gathered force (Marris, Emma, 2011).

Within the Western tradition, up until the Enlightenment period, the biblical Garden of Eden was widely accepted as the foundation of humanity's origin (Dixon Hunt, 2016a). This mythical garden and the events that took place within it are still influential in image making today,

through themes of pursuing utopic ideals, remorse of unredeemable loss, power struggles, purpose and identity. In the original account, Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden to "tend and keep it" (Genesis, 2:15-17) with one proviso: not to eat from the tree of knowledge. Adam and Eve's act of disobedience is labelled the original sin; as a consequence, they were banished from the garden (Genesis, 1973 3:23-24). Two key areas of conflict are prophesied within this story. Firstly, the conflict of domination in relationships, "…Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over for you" (Genesis, 3:16b), heralds the conflict of gender dominance instead of the joint rule and equal status man and woman enjoyed in the garden (Genesis, 1:27-28). Secondly, the conflict of domination between man and nature:

> Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust shall return (Genesis, 3:17-19).

Here the original text prophesies weeds as the by-products of cultivation. Weeds obstruct man's control. Even within this declaration of humanity's limited authority, an acknowledgment of co-mingling between humanity and nature is made.

Figure 1 Masaccio, *Expulsion from the Garden*, approx.1425, Italian Early Renaissance

Masaccio's fresco *Expulsion from the Garden* depicts the complexity of the consequences of the altered relationship of mastery over nature. Here Adam and Eve flee paradise through a gateway on the left. An angelic figure with a sword positioned above them witnesses their anguish and prevents their return. Although the couple walk side by side, their body language

indicates they are responding quite independently. Adam covers his face with his hand, in a completely introverted and self-absorbed gesture. His shame is felt in his mind. Eve however is covers her erogenous zones: her shame is directed at her sexuality. She is judged not on her intellect and wrong decision but on her nakedness, and thus her gender (Clifton, 1999).

Another reading of the body language is that Eve has her head raised, and although self-consciously covering her nakedness, she looks upward and forward. Harrison interprets this as optimism, almost as excitement for something new; a disruption of perfection into a new era where chance, toil, pain, chaos, death and life can all coexist (2008). Both these interpretations have merit and are potentially complementary. I see Eve at this moment crossing a threshold, an oscillation between being contained and unrestrained freedom, a symbiotic transient relationship rather than specific destination. The real tension of this image is the power play. Here the position of power is in a state of transition: without any promise of resolution, it suggests power relations are suspended in a state of flux.

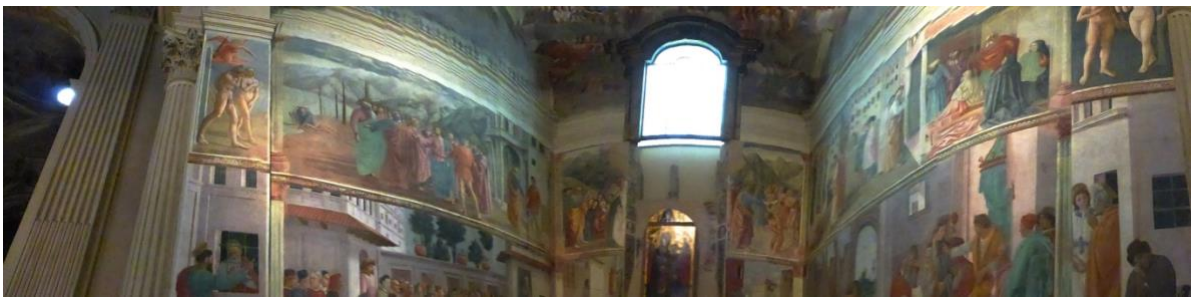

Figure 2: The Annex in Brancacci Chapel, Church of Saint Maria Novella, Florence Fresco

The image is positioned as part of a series of frescos that depict moments in a greater narrative. The figures are transitional. They are on the move from the known into the unknown. The action here is one of emotional charge. This emotional charge is an invitation to consider the key characters' position and in turn your own position in response to the expulsion.

This image can be read two ways; firstly, the image's position (above eye level) and the armed angel, prescribe a dwarfing position to the viewer, who is now implicated by the original sin. Alternatively, the viewer is left with an open narrative to interpret how he/she will respond to this new space, where the knowledge of good and evil is now inevitable; all utopic protection has been removed and conflict or choice between control and wildness is set in motion. Harrison points out that, "the paradox of the age is that we are profoundly conflicted when it

comes to Eden. On one hand we dread it, on the other we chase after it" (2008, p. 165). This observation highlights the tenuous relationship between real and imagined, rational and emotional, familiar and other.

Wild – the mythologised natural or untameable other

Emma Marris in her book, *Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in a Post-Wild World* (2011) challenges romanticised ideas about nature's purest and most natural form being independent of human influence. Marris suggests that the utopian ideal of a pre-human wilderness is redundant, and that the mourning of the 'lost world' is simply misplaced. She suggests that our mindsets need to shift beyond ideas of 'pristine', 'virgin' or 'old growth' as the last great places of intact ecosystems, to consider new modes of wildness. I concur with Marris' position here, as wildness as a force, as she conceives of it, allows for nature to evolve and re-invent itself, as cultural constrains of urbanisation and climate change impact the environment. It is in the possibility for adaptation that we sit on a threshold of something new.

Writer, historian and activist Rebecca Solnit also addresses a misplaced nostalgia and a yearning for paradise lost, saying,

> Eden and paradise represent what we often desire when we go to the unaltered landscape for pleasure or alter the landscape to make it suit us, and Eden, Paradise, Arcadia, and the Promised Land lurk behind most political and environmental arguments, since they are arguments about how to make the world better. *Better* is often imagined as restoration of some ideal state that lapsed somewhere between the Stone Age and the post-war era, and our culture is pervaded by nostalgia for things that may never existed. If we seek to make a future in the image of an ideal past, the particulars of that past matter immensely (Solnit, 2001b, p. 1).

It is important to understand that a viewer is likely to carry a culturally constructed nuance of nostalgia and romanticism when engaging with garden imagery. Solnit acknowledges this and sees its potential to polarise politically rather than unify and create a flexible model that can adapt and evolve. This mythologising of wildness has blinkered us to many opportunities for seeing the potential of a co-habituation of humanity and nature as a work in progress, that needs both the care and nurture that a garden can provide and the opportunity and freedom for nature to thrive and adapt.

Solnit goes further in extending her interpretation of the expulsion myth, reading it as a story about territory, frontiers, border crossings and displacement.

> To put up a fence is to suggest difference when there is none (though there will be), and to draw a border is much the same thing. Paradise means a walled garden, and when Adam and Eve are expelled from Eden, its walls first appear in the narrative, because they only matter from the outside. Adam and Eve are the first refugees, the fig leaves the first cancelled passports, Paradise the first immigration-restricted country… In the last decade, the wall, the guard, and the gate have become increasingly popular devises for maintaining difference, the difference between the garden and the world. They show up on every scale, from domestic to the national. Whatever is inside the wall, past the gate, protected by the garden is imagined as some version of paradise so long as it separateness is protected. Which means paradise is a violent place (Solnit, 2001b, p. 123).

The expulsion from the Garden of Eden may be the first record of a border crossing but the idea that landscape is a contested space rather than a wild, natural space is well defined in Martin Warnke's book *Political Landscape: The Art History of Nature* (1994). In Warnke's concluding remarks he acknowledges "that landscape enters into a partnership with the man-made elements imposed on it, to which it must visibly relate. Boundary stones, roads and monuments convey certain meanings, and these demand certain statements from the landscape" (1994, p. 145). These elements are all emblematic of ownership and control, and within the garden construct still operate in the form of pathways, boarders, edges and other delineating structures. It is when the delineation between these structures is overgrown or meshes with thriving vegetation that the garden appears more natural and wild. Romanticism and nostalgia would have us dream it is possible for a paradise outside of these elements, yet regardless of the ideal there will always be a delineation or edge in garden imagery. The edge could simply be the parameter of the support, or a painted straight line amongst a cacophony of gestural marks. Regardless of its manifestation it is emblematic of a boundary, something which separates and protects.

Historian Martin Jay argues that the taming of the Garden of Eden is the core psychological drive of modernity, where an ideology of control marks a shift from a nature-centric to a human-centric focus (Jay, 2007). He cites W.T.J. Mitchell's essay *Imperial Landscape* (1994), which argues that our perception of the landscape can no longer be a purely neutral aesthetic appreciation because the gaze cannot be disassociated from the "historical, political and aesthetic alertness to violence and the evil written on the land, projected by the gazing eye"

(2007, p. 47). These acts of violence are impositions of "Imperialism and Nationalism" (2007, p. 47).

Within the context of the theorists already discussed, it would be naïve to consider gardens simply as cultural constructs containing nature for aesthetic pleasure. Clearly there is a complexity of motivations and, whether consciously or subconsciously, in hindsight, we can see there are some deeply political, social engineering undertones in many conceptions of what constitutes a garden or gardening. In the forthcoming discussion of Kew gardens in Chapter 2 these undertones are realised pictorially in my discussion of the imperial vista.

In the next chapter I pursue the idea of garden imagery operating as a form of authority. Authority, I argue, is overt and implied within the encompassing narrative, botanical mythology, diagrammatical mapping, the prescribed positioning of the viewer and the mastery of materiality that Kew Gardens embodies.

In laying out a foundation for examining garden imagery, it could be perceived that there is a complex polarisation between wildness and control, with both sides acknowledging the influence of a subjective pursuit for ultimate purification. Mitchell, Jay and Warnke reinforce the notion that authority and control in the garden have a political agenda. Solnit, Marris and Mabey offer new ways of understanding wildness beyond the purification or utopian ideal of the environmental fundamentalist. These 'utopian ideals' have a powerful influence, but they are also utterly flawed. By challenging the historical reading of Masaccio's *Expulsion from the Garden* and the mythologising of Eden, I have identified a threshold where seemingly opposing interpretations and viewpoints can co-exist or sit uneasily in a fluctuating space. This notion of a threshold within the garden context was identified by Dixon Hunt, and expanded upon by Harrison and Copper, who identify the deep need of humanity to care for a garden and that the safe familiarity and hospitality of this bounded space can also be a transitional space to something other. This evocative transition was also identified by Treib, Bachelard and Cocker as an oscillating indeterminable space, which hovers between the constructed and the wild.

In the next chapter I examine the power relationships and their fluidity within two key styles of garden imagery. I look at how we have traditionally viewed garden imagery by examining the wall paintings of the Villa of Livia, known as *The Garden Room,* and contrasting it with Jan

Brueghel the Elder's, *Garden of Eden.* Additionally, the threshold between real and imagined within garden imagery is introduced through the cultural symbolism embedded in nature and utopian ideals

Chapter 1. Real and Imagined Imagery

A garden is the most sophisticated expression of a society's relationship with space and nature

John Dixon Hunt

Introduction

In the Introduction to this project I laid out a framework for key ideas regarding gardens. In defining the garden, I referred to the influential Garden of Eden story which is the Biblical account of the first garden and tension within a garden. Derived from this story, the following concepts were introduced: otherness, control, wildness and oscillations. As these concepts are expanded, a symbiotic fluidity to their operation is beginning to emerge. In this chapter, taking up these concepts, I concretise my argument through a discussion of traditional representations of gardens by examining the wall paintings of the Villa of Livia, known as *The Garden Room* (ca. 30-20 B.C.E.) and Jan Brueghel the Elder's *Garden of Eden* (1612). These exemplify two dominant historical modes for viewing: *The Garden Room* functions in a situated way, which implicates the embodied participation of the viewer, whilst Jan Brueghel the Elder's *Garden of Eden* operates as a vista, a scene to be examined rather than experienced.

I have chosen these particular images because they are indicative of the political and cultural agendas of their times. They speak about ideas that are outside the pictorial space, and which appeal to the imagination – in different ways. *The Garden Room* depicts a real garden, whereas Brueghel's *Garden of Eden* is purely conceptualised garden. Brueghel has diagrammatically constructed a space that he has creatively imagined, although his source material came from meticulous observation.

To expand upon the power relations in the imagery of these two distinct structures I introduce the Foucauldian conception of power[3] as the theoretical foundation to my formal analysis of the two garden images, identifying *power over* as a form of authority and *power to* as a function

[3] In his lecture of 1979 'Power and Norm', Michel Foucault distinguishes between different kinds of power and agency, which has since been understood as *power over* and *power to*. For the purpose of this research project I have adopted the Foucauldian concepts of *power over* and *power to*, and throughout the research project of have used these as labels.

of agency. This operation of power and understanding of knowledge-power within the cultural symbolism in the imagery relates to a broad question within the project: how are issues such as control and authority used in garden imagery? In these examples control and authority are discussed as a form of *power over.*

Cultivating Power

According to philosopher Michel Foucault, power is not something that is possessed but something exercised. Despite Foucault's lack of a definitive theory of power, sociological theorist Elisheva Sadan says that his key contribution was to expand our understanding of power from the empirical activity of identifying those who possess it to examining power as activated by "an infinite series of actions" (2004, p. 38). From this matrix, power remains transient and subjective. I have utilised Foucault's conception of power in my analysis of garden imagery because the tension and relational nuances that he exposes as he unravels the layers of decentralised power relations are readily applicable to formal shifts that were immediately visually apparent to me as I surveyed historical and contemporary paintings of gardens. Moreover, Foucault's thinking informed not just my pictorial analysis, but my thinking about how to engage observers of my own paintings.

In the case of garden imagery an 'infinite series of actions', such as those to which Sadan refers, operate in the transient space of the image and the viewer's engagement. Additionally, Foucault surmises that power is not dependent on agreement or resistance, but only exists when it is exercised. Any resistance to power both confirms and reaffirms its boundaries, redefining the dynamic by empowering the resistance (Sadan, 2004). If this idea is localised to control and wildness in a garden – with control being a combination of deliberate planting within the structural boundaries of borders and wildness being the plant life breaching those boundaries, a subversion of the power happens or another power relationship when resistance is promoted, in this case wildness.

Foucault writes, "Power is always a definite form of momentary and constantly reproduced encounters among a definite number of individuals. Power is thus not possessed because it is 'in play', because it risks itself" (Foucault, Morris & Patton, 1979, p. 60). In Foucauldian terms, then, the discipline of painting is considered conventional, but in mastering the conventions of

the medium, the painter also develops the ability to expand, subvert or disrupt those norms. The painter's power lies in creative improvisation. Foucault argues that the duty of the custodian of knowledge-power is to provide a report (1979, p. 63). In the case of the painter, reporting of mastery and subversion lies within image construction and their technical facility with the fluidity of paint. The exercise of power is ultimately relational, however, and in the context of painting power results from the active encounter between the painting and the viewer. This power play is in the negotiation of the viewer and the act of viewing, which I see as the power tussle in the way pictorial composition and the agency of the paint sets up a field of visual activity. The operation of pictorial devices, the embedded symbolic power of the Imperial vista and representation (Mitchell, 1994), and the understanding of the cultural influence of the utopic garden are all, by default, structural boundaries that confirm a position of *power over*. But if the image and the painter resist the knowledge-power of all the above mentioned, allowing the agency of the material and the viewer to be 'at play', the power by resistance is engaged and becomes a shifting towards *power to*. The power play remains fluid, reinforcing the view that "power only exists when it is exercised" (Sadan, 2004, p. 60).

The image's elicitation of the viewer's position is where the power and agency conundrum plays out. One position is surveillance of a vista: this is a position of authority, judgment and possession of what lies before you. The greatest vantage point for this view is normally from a distancing elevation so that the vista is expansive and removed. This view point has strongly influenced garden design and aligns with the writings of Mitchell, Warnke and Jay. It reinforces the position of ownership and *power over*. The other position is one of being in and part of the garden. It is an engagement of apprehending and navigation of the ground. This experience is more visceral and intimate; the viewer is drawn closer to the surface of the image to an awareness of the painterly materiality and intricacies of the garden environment. Rather than representing a vista, it evokes the imagination and sensation being in the garden.

Let me now expand on this fluid relationship between vista and immersion with reference to specific examples, *The Garden Room* in the imperial Villa of Livia at Prima Porta, (ca. 30-20 B.C.E.) and Jan Brueghel the Elder's *Garden of Eden* (1612). These examples are exemplars of both modes of power, over and to, as they relate to vista and immersion, however they also demonstrate the fluidity of

The Garden Room in the imperial Villa of Livia at Prima Porta, (ca. 30-20 B.C.E.)

The wall paintings of the Villa of Livia, known as *The Garden Room*, were situated in the private semi-subterranean dining area of the holiday house of Livia, the wife of Rome's first emperor, Augustus. The work is arguably the first 'landscape' image to emerge from this period (Beckett, 1994). Although it does not reference the Garden of Eden story, it does elevate a utopian garden by drawing strongly on Roman and Greek mythology.

Having unified the Roman empire after decades of civil war, Augustus heralded a new era of peace. As part of his legacy, he appropriated botanical mythology to reinforce the utopian ideal of the "Golden Age of harmony and plenty, founded on piety and agrarian values of old" (Giesecke, 2015, p. 79). The powerful political symbolism of this work relies on associations between certain plants and Roman deities and virtues. Apollo, the god of healing, light and prophecy, is associated with the laurel, palm and acanthus. Zeus, also known as Jupiter, is associated with the oak, the symbol of civic order. The goddess of procreation, Aphrodite or Venus, the mother of life and mistress of gardens, is allied to the highly prized and cultivated fragrant rose and myrtle (Giesecke, 2012, 2015). Additionally, the palm is associated with victory, and the laurel is associated with Daphne's transformation to escape the relentless pursuit of Apollo. Even though the impact and power of the symbolism has diluted with time, Annette Giesecke points out that this *Garden Room* was a manifesto of the fertility and order of the Roman state. She writes of the painting:

> Needless to say, this is no ordinary garden. Not only is there a perfect balance of 'wild' nature and nature tamed, but – miraculously – plants flower and produce fruit with no regard for seasonality. …By implication, the entire Roman pantheon collaborated in the design of this painted garden, which so vividly demonstrated the fruitful, paradisiacal rebirth of the Roman state (2015, p. 81).

Here we see a political and symbolic agenda to the work: it proclaims to the viewer that they are subjects of a harmonious and glorious new era.

The painting has poetic naturalism which surrounds the beholder like a wall of cultivated vegetation. Two small fences act as spatial divides, symbolically restraining the potential wildness of the vegetation and defining the garden as a contained space, bounded by structures of control. The lowest boundary is a trellis that prevents the grass from creeping

into the room. A narrow band of grass and ornamentals (the garden zone) leads to a low fence that delineates the beginning of the fruit trees (the cultivated zone), which becomes more intense and tangled toward the far-ground (the wild zone). The garden is tidy. Control is evident in the ordering of the plants' position, but this is softened by the gentle lyricism and movement in the foliage, which suggests wildness in the background.

Figure 3: *The Garden Room* in the imperial 'Villa of Livia' at Prima Porta, near Rome (ca. 30-20 B.C.E.)

Roman landscapes were traditionally segmented into three zones or what is referred to as 'the three natures': the wild, the cultivated and the gardened (Kuttner, 1999). Closest to the buildings was the garden zone, showcasing significant plants and formal features around the villa. Here, aesthetic appeal was prioritised over culinary use. Culinary function, however, is prioritised in the 'second nature', the horticultural zone, which would depict orchards, vineyards, livestock, irrigation and structures to facilitate agricultural production. Beyond this zone was the 'wild' zone or 'first nature', which encompassed wilderness, the woods, the distant mountains and the unknown. This mysterious, inhospitable zone was also associated as the territory of the gods (Dixon Hunt, 2000). Here, in *The Garden Room* we see all three zones compressed within the imagery, discernible yet unified to encompass the viewer. The image compression is emphasised by the haziness of the distant horizon; the overlapping and blurring of foliage is hemmed in by the blue sky, preventing the eye from registering a depth

of field. Another element which frustrates the mimetic *trompe-l'oeil* reading of this work is the framing of the sky. Missing from the frescoes is the original stuccoed vaulted ceiling which, according to ancient historian Ann Kuttner, would have been painted brightly in red, white and blue – in the same manner Romans painted the ceilings of real grottoes (1999). This absent part of the structure, juxtaposed with garden illusion, Kuttner says, "misleads our sense of balance of 'naturalness' with artificiality". She observes how unusual this domestic room is in its structure.

> One looked in across the short axis of the long hall, and only on entering discovered its great extent; this was artificially emphasised by the slightly diminished scale of the central tree and niche at either end. Most startling would have been the disclosure of no colonnades or arched frame; the garden prospect ran unbroken under a craggy rock fringe which denoted the vaulted space as a natural cave... Livia's room puts us in a grotto to look out from its mouth at subtly altering gardens, whichever way we turn under the unchanging frame (1999, p. 27).

Figure 4: Detail of *The Garden Room* in the imperial 'Villa of Livia' at Prima Porta.

The Garden Room has a tangible sense of domestication, seen not only through the ordering of the pictorial space and the compression of 'the three natures', but also in the way it cocoons the viewer within a simulated grotto.

The rendering of sixty-nine species of birds, along with realistic representations of at least twenty-four botanical species from the Mediterranean and Asia Minor regions, have an acute sense of detailed observation (Beard & Henderson, 2001). Nonetheless, some forms are

stylised; the foliage in particular suggests a patterning in its repeated motifs. Kuttner remarks on this aspect of stylisation, as a mode of ordering.

> Clearly, painters were interested to address the relations between mimetic artefact (fresco) and its artistic and natural subjects, and to explore the character of human pattern-making and its relations to time. Garden rooms addressed these themes by juxtaposing permanent artifice (architecture, artefacts, art), to the ordered exploitation of ephemeral life in garden and field, and also to 'unordered' nature which could be patterned simply by being looked at (1999, p. 9).

Figure 5: Detail of *The Garden Room* in the imperial 'Villa of Livia' at Prima Porta

Some branches are bent, and the fall of light on these twisted leaves accentuates the illusion of gentle movement. The illusionistic play of light captures the tension of an unfolding moment rather than a staged static decoration. On the other hand, the moment is endlessly prolonged. There are no decaying flowers. All the fruit is at the point of being ripe to eat, giving an air of lavishness to the imagery. Everything is lush; the cool palette is predominantly of soothing blues and greens. The light is artificially even, giving no clues to the time of day, so it is difficult to situate yourself in relationship to time in this space. The light source appears to be from within the room. The shadows in the foreground are purely relational to the movement of the foliage. The sense of ambiguity of time is reinforced by the lack of windows or natural light. Coupled with the fact that the viewer steps down into the room, where all the fruit is at its peak, this loads the image with an expectation that something is about to happen. The deliberate suspension of time and depiction of vegetation on the very cusp of fruitfulness suggests the image has an agenda beyond decorative illustration. Remembering that this was

the private entertaining room of the most powerful woman in the Empire, the fecundity and intimacy of the garden, coupled with the political symbolism, charged the experience of steeping into this space with sensual tranquillity and intimidation. Livia's room is deliberately potent.

> And, every plant is symbolically loaded, suggestive of Augustan peace and prosperity.[4] For example, the quince and pomegranate were standard symbols of fertility; both were sacred to Venus, the Near Easter nature/mother goddess of Cybele, and Juno, patron goddess of women as wives and mothers. The pomegranate, together with the poppy, had ties with Ceres, goddess of the harvest, too; it was this fruit that had sealed the fate of Ceres' daughter Persephone as Hades' reluctant queen. …and ivory to Bacchus, responsible for all burgeoning plant growth (Giesecke, 2015, p. 81).

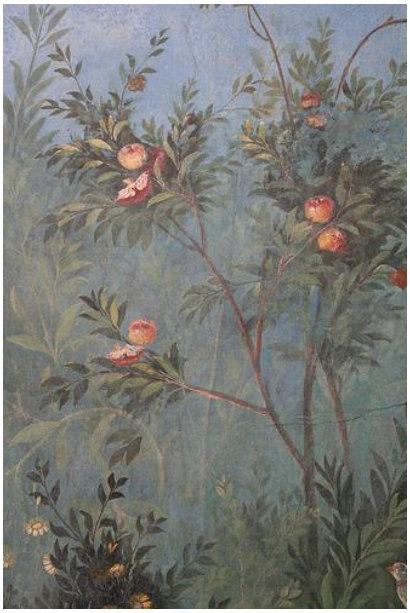

Figure 6: Detail of *The Garden Room* in the imperial 'Livia's Villa' at Prima Porta

For the contemporary viewer, a factor that detracts from the illusory potency of the fresco is the chalkiness of the aged surface. The effects of time resulting in a fragmentation of some of the original image, and the dull coloration caused by the pigment's absorption into the walls' porous surface. For the viewer, this brings an awareness back to the surface, drawing a conscious recognition of the painting's production, offering a glimpse into the process rather than the illusion.

[4] For the symbolism of individual plants Giesecke cites Castrionta, Ara Pacis and Giesecke , *Mythology of Plants: Botanical Lore from Ancient Greece and Rome*, Los Angeles: The J. Paull Getty Museum, 2014, p 32-39.

In his book *Courbet's Realism*, Michael Fried describes a modernist shift from theatrics to absorption in pictorial space. Fried analyses the way Courbet imbues himself into the pictorial frame and implicates the viewer as beholder by creating a pictorial perspective of immersion (1990, p. 139). If we apply a similar logic to *The Garden Room* painting in Livia's Villa, we can appreciate that the beholder is not simply manipulated as a passive observer to contemplate a painted surface, but is largely empowered to negotiate architectural and imaginary space as an embodied, imaginative participant. The fresco offers a multi-modal engagement with both real and virtual spaces. The work is a fabricated utopian vision of a garden (Beard & Henderson, 2001) and the virtual space is a type of abstraction, a non-place, which carries a sense of otherness. Through Foucault, we can appreciate this situatedness as a position in which knowledge-power operates. The image construction facilitates an interplay between the authority of the painter and the agency of the viewer. The knowledge-power is implanted in the symbolism, the detailed rendering of the vegetation and contained encircling of the vista; however, operating concurrently is the flexible accessibility of the viewer to knowledge of the artist's process and the vulnerability through the chalkiness of the surface, as well as the power to choose to step into the illusionistic encompassing garden. The viewer has the power and option to engage simultaneously between an imagined utopic ideal and a real space.

Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Garden of Eden*, 1612.

Jan Brueghel the Elder's *Garden of Eden* operates as a vista but has an incredible complex composition which draws the viewer into the detail rather than an overall panoramic view. Brueghel has been attributed with painting around 106 versions of the Garden of Eden[5] (Safarik, 1993) so we can safely assume that his compositional strategies were very considered. At first glance Eden is portrayed as the ideal where harmonic relationships play out: animals that would normally be predators are featured alongside their prey, wild next to domestic, none showing fear. They are depicted as playful and lyrical in their posture and presented in pairs, referencing Noah's Ark. In the background on the left we see a very small Adam and Eve, just prior to consuming the forbidden fruit: they are not the focal point.

[5] This version of the Garden of Eden at Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome, is also known as Earthly Paradise with the Original Sin and Eden and the Original Sin.

Figure 7: Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Garden of Eden*, 1612 - Oil on copper, 50.3 x 80.1 cm, Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome

This small painting (50.3 x 80.1cm) is salon hung[6] in the Galleria Doria Pamphilj in Rome, alongside many other works. The lure of this image is in the painter's mastery of observation and control, with the precise rendering of intricate detail; one- or two-haired filament brushes rendered the fur of the small animals. The descriptive textures of the foliage produce an idealised opulence in the patterning, an almost graphic quality. The light and detail entice you to approach the painting's surface. The work is painted on a copper support, which contributes to its luminous surface. The fine details are hidden from a greater viewing distance so as you draw closer the image reveals itself slowly, encouraging curiosity and wonder. It is impossible not to marvel at the painter's skill. The meticulous detail and complex composition is suggestive of a very deliberate power-as-knowledge focus, which re-examines the Eden narrative by prioritising the harmony of the animal kingdom over the enormity of Adam and Eve's act of rebellion towards God by partaking of the forbidden fruit.

[6] Salon hung means to display painted works in clusters from floor to ceiling. The style became a popular mode of displaying work in 17th century France.

The perspective of this image is quite unusual. The meandering river and rolling hills on the right side give the perception of distance and depth, a classic aerial perspective vista. However, the rest of the image is a shallower space within the narrative driven by diagrammatical compositional groupings. The image appears to be constructed from six or seven individual images or zones of information, segmenting or stepping the pictorial space, as demonstrated in Figure 8.

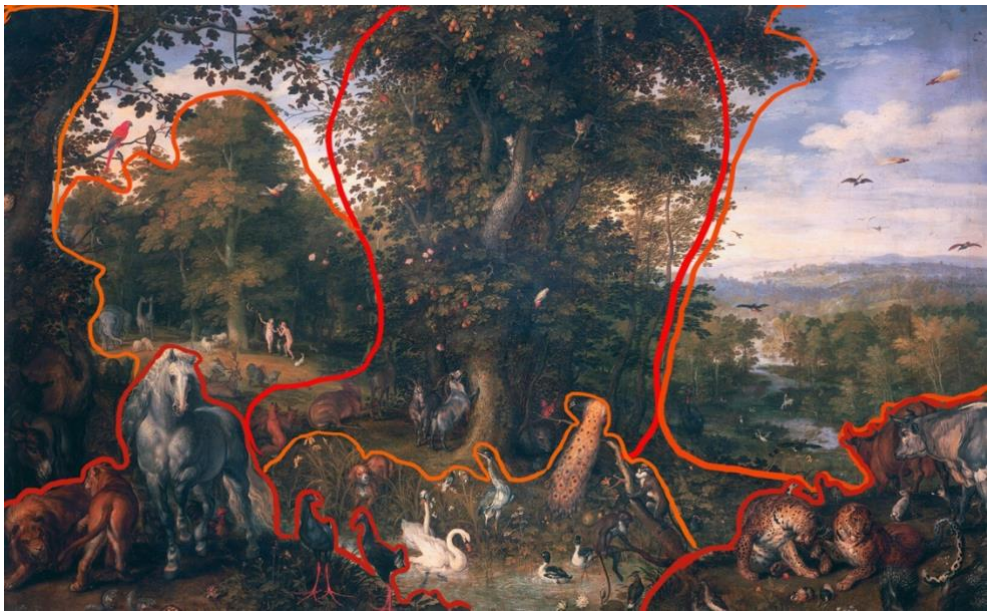

Figure 8: Illustration of different spatial zones in Jan Brueghel the Elder's *Garden of Eden*

Each of these zones is self-sufficient and complete as a stand-alone image. Each holds its own relationship and narrative within the elements of the individual zones. In most sections we see a pairing of animals. When you examine the exhaustive collection of Brueghel work, you discover that these very same zones have been repeated or reconfigured in a slightly different position in other paintings. As a compositional device, this was common practice; however, Brueghel was renowned for his meticulous study of animals' behaviour and mnemonic credibility (Kolb, 2005).

It is interesting to note how small and seemingly insignificant Adam and Eve are in Brueghel's Eden. This could be read as an indication of how Brueghel was politically contained. This is an acceptable cultural subject matter for its time; however, the emphasis here is one of celebrating eco systems, of how the animals and environment are all connected, at one with the swampy earth. Adam and Eve are part of this eco system but they are still separate; it is as though they do not realise their interdependence nor vulnerability. This

compartmentalisation of Eden is emblematic of the push and pull, or constant negotiation, of the viewer's relationship with allegorical content which has become more secular and as such challenges the traditional narrative of the Garden of Eden, of Adam and Eve severing the utopic relationship.

When all the zones are stitched together the beholder is invited to step into the different levels of pictorial space: foreground, mid-foreground, far-mid ground, leading to central mid-ground, then over to meandering far-ground. Each of these defined spaces has its own focus, but when stitched together they offer multiple viewpoints. I find this stepping and independence of each zone uncanny; it introduces an element of otherness. Seemingly it offers a conventional perspective, yet with prolonged viewing, a distortion of space and saturation of information builds. This distortion and saturation offers something outside the vista, with details that are normally hidden. Though such a small image, its multiple viewpoints simultaneously enlarge, compress and flatten the pictorial space by bringing a great deal of the detail close to the picture plane.

Figure 9: An example of one of the self-contained zones in Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Garden of Eden*

Discussing Van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece* (1432) David Hockney recognised a similar strategy in the use of perspective, where the final image is a compilation of several intricate studies. He writes that, "our bodies may accept one central viewpoint, but our mind's eye moves around close to everything, except the far horizon…"(Hockney, 2006, p. 94). In fact, the longer you look at Brueghel's painting, the more it operates like a photomontage, where your eye glides

across the surface gathering information and piecing it all together. The dramatic use of shadows and detail draws you quickly to the surface as well as inviting you into the pictorial space. The multiple viewpoints activate the eye to shift from a glance to a gaze (Bryson, 1986). I see the saturation of information and the overlapping of multiple viewpoints as a form of Foucauldian *power to*, which draws the beholder to step closer to the surface, to discover the individual narratives and, at the same time, provides the opportunity to decide for oneself what the narrative is.

The strangeness of the multiple viewpoints brings an element of otherness – an alternative space - into the composition. The balancing of several perspectives at one time denies the viewer a static position. So, although you can read the image, you are not offered easy access into the pictorial space, and inevitably you experience the scene as an outsider.

On a physical level the viewer is larger than the image, and larger than the wild animals. This extended scale reinforces a sense of human supremacy over nature, a hegemonic message that is supported by minute observation. Here we see science (acute observation) and religion (an imagined garden) working together in a common quest for knowledge and control, situated in a room with paintings in gilded gold frames hung three to four levels high.

From a contemporary perspective, what seems at first glance to be highly figurative naturalistic composition can be read as an abstraction of the visual interpretation of reality. The amplification, condensing and ornamentation of detail offer the viewer access to information far beyond what we would experience in reality - a form of hyper-reality. It is a viewpoint that is impossible in reality and only accessible through the treatment of paint, which essentially is a form of collage, with its condensing and saturation of information. This form of otherness is seductive. It is an opportunity the viewer would not have outside the window the artist has created. The all-over sense is one of *power over* with this work, due to the artist's orchestration of the viewer's attention with the allure of its hyper-real information-saturated composition and surface. At the same time, the artist has subverted the allegorical content and offered the viewer the *power to* draw their own narrative.

Conclusion to Chapter 1

At the outset of this chapter, I introduced Foucault's conception of power as a concept which is exercised, relational, momentary and 'in play' pending the encounters that activate it (Foucault, Morris & Patton, 1979); identifying *power over* as a form of authority and *power to* as a function of agency. By analysing the meshing of information embedded in these emblematic historical garden images, *The Garden Room* and Brueghel's *Garden of Eden*, the subjectivity and fluidity of these power relations has been magnified.

Critical to this chapter is the structure of real and imagined garden imagery and how it has been implied in these two historical exemplars. One of the images, *The Garden Room*, is a real[7] experiential space, loaded with political propaganda and the other, the collaged vantage of Brueghel's *Garden of Eden*, an imaginary space. The perspective structures of immersion and vantage and the concept of understanding of a garden image through experience is picked up in Chapter 2, where real garden sites are aligned with images of those gardens.

[7] The use of the word 'real' in the context of *The Garden Room* refers to the source material for the compositional structure, the understanding of the three zones was standard thought and accessible in the artists day. The artist could visit 'real' gardens to gather source material for the composition. Whereas in the case of Brueghel's *Garden of Eden* although the artist had exercised meticulous observation of individual animals the construction of the overall composition of utopic harmony the artist had to imagine, Eden did not exist. Consequently, the relationships and interactions of the animals within the one space and what Adam and Eve looked like were all imagined.

Chapter 2. Two different structures and experiences

Introduction

This chapter explores the idea that viewing garden imagery is explicitly linked to the experience of the garden. It also demonstrates the tensions within aesthetic choices of control and wildness. To do this I examine two iconic garden sites and their related images, these being Kew Gardens located in the United Kingdom and Monet's Garden in Giverny, France.

The purpose of examining these two sites and corresponding garden imagery is to demonstrate two different garden structures and two different ways of experiencing garden imagery, through the tropes of control and wildness. Kew Gardens and its imagery provide an example of control. It is a highly constructed, Imperial, politicised example; where the vista, vantage points and views take precedence. Monet's Giverny Garden and imagery emphasise the wildness of the garden. The point of view is from within the garden, so the perspective is experiential and not from any overlooking or powerful vantage points.

In the previous chapter, a real and an imagined garden were examined through the works *The Garden Room*, Villa of Livia, and Jan Brueghel the Elder's *Garden of Eden.* I also introduced the concept of power as relational, within the theoretical framework of Foucauldian *power over* and *power to*. This chapter extends on the formal operations of the imagery by drawing deeper into the political, gendered and cultural power embedded in representations of the garden. The theoretical framework draws upon Craig Owens' critique on representation and Martin Warnke's politicisation of landscape.

What is critical about the analysis of these two garden sites and their imagery is that our experience of the garden representations is implicit in our experience of gardens. In these examples two very different ways of approaching garden imagery are demonstrated. One sees the garden as a vista, indicative of *power over* and the other is experiential and evocative suggestive of *power to*.

Garden sites and sights

Representation is not power neutral but a subset of society's cultural and knowledge production. Art historian and post-modernist critic Craig Owens argues that traditional art history was not cognisant of its own implication in reinforcing Western modes of power. In *Representation, Appropriation, and Power* (1992a), Owens steps outside the art historical discipline and towards literary criticism to reveal a re-inscription of authority, in order to move beyond it.

To this point, I have discussed historical works that represent gardens to confirm to what Owens describes as "representations of representation" (1992a, p. 89). To demonstrate this power bias, I examine the site of Kew Garden and a representation of Kew garden, by Edward Rooker (1724-74), after William Marlow (1740-1813). The work is rather curiously titled, *A View of the Wilderness*[8]*, with the Alhambra, the Pagoda & the Mosques in the Royal Gardens of Kew,* c.1763.

Kew Gardens, United Kingdom

Kew Gardens[9] is a leading institution in the botanical world. Originally in a celebration of Imperialism, plants and curiosities of the Empire were brought together at Kew to be collected. The mysteries of the plant world were transformed from the mysterious to the known.

The 300 acres of gardens contain a multitude of controlled vistas, each displaying different habitats. These are constructed to provide an ideal environment for these plants as well as a didactic, social and visual experience for the public.

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8 Wilderness was a fashionable garden style in the 18th century – influenced by Renaissance gardens called bosco (in Italy) and bosquet (at Versailles). Wilderness style rapidly evolved and become more complicated within the pleasure gardens structure, forming garden rooms and disorientating pathways. However in their basic form, Wilderness refers to sections within the garden design which were bounded by avenues of formal planting; within these spaces random plantings of a variety of woodland species are used to form a natural looking, unordered thicket. These spaces were seen as inspirational, designed to encourage meditation, pleasure and conversations, and a highly admired feature of noblemen's gardens (Clark, 2014).

9 Today Kew is a leading global repository of botanical knowledge, offering an extensive collection of living plants – up to 90% of the worlds known species, it is home to the Millennium Seed Bank, the largest wild plant seed bank in the world, offering extensive databases and scientific expertise to fundamental plant and fungal information (Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, 2014).

Figure 10: Penelope Burnett, *Kew Gardens*, *2015 – Research* panorama photograph

The formality and visual control of the structures, the landscaping, the pathways and the buildings reinforce Warnke's proposition that boundaries, pathways and roads are the classic signposts of control and political ownership (1994) (Illustrated in Figures 10 & 11). The manicured vistas have no disruptions or evidence of weeds; the investment of labour is evident but the labourers are unseen. The authoritative position of this vista is accentuated with the mimicry of other cultures; for example, a Chinese Pagoda erected in 1762 and a replica of the Gate of Nishi Hongan-ji. A Temple of Aeolus (built in 1760) and the Ruined Arch (1759-60), designed by Sir William Chambers, both reference Ancient Rome and its mythology. These structures were technological feats in their day and, positioned where they are, offer high observation points for surveying the lay of the gardens. Through the mastery of vantage points (perspective) and technological mastery (knowledge power), Kew Gardens offers a particular utopian vision. It can be interpreted as an Eden that is not controlled by God, where humanity is subject not to God's order, but where knowledge-power controls wildness.

Figure 11: Penelope Burnett, *Kew Gardens*, 2015 – Research photographs

Over many years of the Gardens' operation the vistas have been refined. The utilitarian areas such as the nursery and composting plant, both vital in the process of care, have been off limits to the public eye until recently. Kew now boasts of one of the largest compost heaps in Europe and has a viewing platform for observing the area. With political and attitudinal shifts towards ecological management, this area is now exhibited and celebrated. The place of propagation and decay, originally omitted from vision, could be argued to be the wild side of the Gardens. Kew now acknowledges plant life is key for humanity's future survival, and displays its scientific expertise in sustainable practice.

Kew gardens provide a physical space where care, knowledge and control of the garden have been formative and fluid over the last two hundred and fifty years. However, it is in the "representations of representation" (Owens, 1992c, p. 89), in this case a representation of Kew gardens, that the power position is most clearly exaggerated and exhibited.

Edward Rooker, A View of the Wilderness, with the Alhambra, the Pagoda and the Mosques in the Royal Gardens of Kew, c.1763

Figure 12: Edward Rooker (1724-74), after William Marlow (1740-1813), *A View of the Wilderness, with the Alhambra, the Pagoda and the Mosques in the Royal Gardens of Kew*, c.1763 - Etching, 44.0 x 59.3 cm (sheet); 31.6 x 46.3 cm (plate)

The formal exaggeration and the dominance of the Pagoda which towers over the scene in Edward Rooker's etching *A View of the Wilderness, with the Alhambra, the Pagoda and the Mosques in the Royal Gardens of Kew* accentuate the authority of the Kew site. The Pagoda's tip almost touches the picture's edge. The perspectival overstatement of the dominance of the Pagoda is made plain by contrasting the picture to snapshots of the same scene.

The etching depicts a type of idealism that is quite different from the utopianism of being cared-for and care-free under the knowledge of a divine power. Rooker's etching emphasises nature being controlled by knowledge in a garden in which there are apparently no limits placed on human endeavour or acquisition. All forms of architecture and plant material have been appropriated from the reaches of the Empire, reinforcing a sense of cultural supremacy. The position of power has moved from purely reflecting what one sees – as through a window - to an interpretation of the triumphs of the Empire's knowledge production through science,

technology and colonisation. The Pagoda stands erect, as a phallic symbol of masculine virility and reiteration of the Tower of Babel.[10]

The use of what was then a relatively new medium, the print, carried the authority as the leading form of scientific illustration. The acute observation and attention to detail is similar to that of the Brueghel painting discussed in the previous chapter. However, in this image the form is totally dependent on the precision with which line and tonality have been employed; this is in itself a form of exquisite mastery. Colour and gesture, historically seen as secondary to tone and draughttsmanship (Batchelor, 2000) are absent from Rooker's vocabulary. This image is intended to document and reinforce the magnitude of the empirical endeavour. The two human figures are indicative of the scale of the architecture, and they are depicted as though they themselves are struck by the majestic dominance of the Pagoda.

Rooker's mode of mark making is illustrative and precise, bordering on obsessively meticulous. The tonal shifts and nuances are almost indiscernible to the naked eye. Minute marks portray the rhythmical movement of the dense foliage. The cloudy sky is starkly overpowered by the contrasting weight and boldness of the architectural elements. These organic structures become a unifying backdrop for the boldly designed environment.

It is a peculiar composition. Optically, the Pagoda appears to lean slightly to the right and then sway back to upright at the top section. This is emphasised and destabilised by the lighter triangular plane representing lawn in the mid-ground. This incline of the lower third forms a spatial tension: the ground is oddly flattened, like a stage backdrop. It offers no plausible vantage point. Detailed areas seem self-contained, as if composite scenes are stitched together, with each potentially containing their own narrative. The image reads from left to right with foreground (left), mid-ground (central) and far-ground (right). It has a mechanical logic that negates the romanticism of the windswept, lone dark figure dwarfed by an exotic Mosque in the far distance.

[10] The Tower of Babel is a biblical story where mankind unified to build a tower to reach the heights of heaven so they could be like God (Genesis, 11:1-9)

To reinforce how curious and masterfully fastidious and orchestrated this composition is, we need to appreciate that the etching is rendered in reverse.

Figure 13: Horizontal inversion of Edward Rooker, A View of the Wilderness, with the Alhambra, the Pagoda & the Mosques in the Royal Gardens of Kew, c.1763

Indeed, it is instructive to invert the image (Figure 13). Our reading of space and balance now loses intensity and focus. The sky dominates the image, and the top left quadrant opens to slip away from the edge. In this inverted state, the image looks awkward and unresolved, which demonstrates just how deliberate, authoritative and discerning Rooker has been in his process of compositional construction. His labour has been to devise what Owens refers to as "the gaze of the king"[11] (Owens, 1992c, p. 107).

The monochromatic etching of *A View of the Wilderness* operates in the classic Dutch landscape format, where the upper two-thirds of the pictorial space is sky. The eye is drawn into the pictorial space by the dark contrast of the foliage and exotic architectural structures in the bottom left corner. This contrast also acts as a framing, like a stage curtain which leads the eye into the intricacies of the detail in the lower third of the landscape. The single-point, aerial perspective is reinforced by the graduated tonal shifts in the composition; the closer the object is to the viewer the stronger the contrast. This image is both a celebration of the fanciful

[11] Owens' reference to the gaze of the king is from the analysis of *Las Meninas*, where the viewer is actually trapped within the painting to only see from the authoritarian position of the king himself in whom everything is subject, especially labour.

– with an aristocratic couple enjoying the curious exotic architecture and plants, and a reinforcement of Imperial domination through knowledge of having exact replicas built (Warnke, 1994).

The process of making an etching lends itself to reproduction; their reproducibility lends itself to accessibility and portability, and the small scale makes this type of illustration easy to handle and pore over. Indeed, the availability and tactility of the image reinforce the viewer's sense of dominance and ownership. A Foucauldian *power to* relationship is in operation through the scale, replicability and commercial accessibility of the image, irrespective of the authority that the image represents.

Writing about Foucault and Marin in 1992, Owens made some important observations about pictorial representation in relation to knowledge and power. Owens acknowledges the function of representation to reinforce structures of power and cultural ideology. In terms of what works of art say (or represent) and, more importantly, what these works of art *do* (1992c) he writes,

> Both [Foucault and Marin] work to expose the ways in which domination and subjugation are inscribed within the representational systems of the West. Representing, then, is not – nor can it be neutral; it is an act – indeed, the founding act – of power in our culture (Owens, 1992c, p. 91).

Owens argues that Foucault and Martin – though from different positions – not only acknowledge this, but recognise the tension between the humanistic approach of the art history perspective and post-structuralism's aversion to universal man, which totally disempowers otherness.

Addressing Foucault and Marin's critical responses to key works, Owens writes that both authors are at pains to "demonstrate not their uniqueness, but their conformity with the anonymous, impersonal rules which regulated the Classical system of representation" (Owens, 1992c, p. 89).

We can extend Owens' logic to Edward Rooker's etching of Kew Gardens, in which the Pagoda and Mosque offer the idea of cultural otherness. This image presents a position of domination and exhibitionism – *power to*.

In the latter part of this chapter I argue that a selection of examples of painted gardens demonstrates modes of resistance against realism and representation. These paintings serve to depict otherness, or gesture beyond what can be imagined. Otherness in this case endeavours to break out of the power relations inherent in the traditions of painting. Otherness becomes a negotiation between the viewer and the picture plane, oscillating between figuration and abstraction, both real and imagined. Here, otherness is celebrated as something which is uncontrollable and, as such, is classified as *power to* or wildness. Where the vista and vantage point has been abandoned for a more immersive experience, wildness can be understood as the agency of paint, the artist and the viewer in relationship to the image.

Monet's Garden, Giverny

Monet's Garden in Giverny is one of the most famous painted gardens in history. I have chosen Monet's Giverny garden with its notable illusion of wildness and celebration of nature as a contrasting example to the polished control of Kew. Unlike Kew, there are no statues or formal beds,[12] no manicured lawns and, apart from the iconic red Japanese bridge and meandering path, the vistas have the illusion of being an untouched natural oasis. In light of Warnke's argument of political power signified through structures, it appears that Monet deliberately subverted this relationship by elevating wildness and the untameable side of nature. What is not immediately apparent, however, is the extraordinary lengths of control to which Monet went in creating this watery oasis; by diverting the flow of a local river and introducing hybrid waterlilies from the 1889 Universal Exhibition (Matthiesson, 2013).[13] The paradox is that the

[12] Please note I am only referring to the waterlily garden, not the more formal enclosed Norman garden closest to the house, which was established before Monet purchased the property. However, Monet did modify this geometrical structured garden to reflect the English cottage garden style, which embraced seasonal drifts of colour, to soften the edges and constraints of French garden design, thus reflecting the informal influence of garden designers William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll (Dumas, 2015).

[13] Originally medieval monks had diverted the water flow to the plot from the Ru, via a tributary of the Epte, to breed fish for the local monastery within this low–lying marshy area (Matthiesson, 2013, p. 92). Monet, seeing it as ideal for creating his visionary waterlily pond, purchased the plot in February 1893 with the intent of diverting the Epte's flow again and planting the hybrid specimens of waterlilies he saw in the Universal Exhibition he saw in 1889. Immediately a campaign of resistance from locals and bureaucrats alike cited fears of contamination downstream and the invasion of exotic plants, both of which could harm livestock. This battle of continuing objections took its toll with Monet, who at one point wrote in exasperation to Alice Hoschedé that they could have the land. Thankfully the issue was resolved in 1894 and the work on the pond began.

outcome appears so unorchestrated and wild, but is in fact the result of human creativity. The wild here is imagined.

Figure 14: Penelope Burnett, *Monet's Garden, Giverny* 2014 - Research photographs

The experience of the garden is one of intimacy and private wonder, as you walk through the garden with its enveloping foliage, catching glimpses of reflected light on a deep brooding expanse of water, punctuated with islands of waterlilies. The viewer is within and immersed into the site, rather than viewing it from points of vantage. As in *the Garden Room* in Livia's Villa, you step into a constructed space which has a depthless compression and intensity of visual stimulation.

In line with Harrison's idea of gardening being a vocation of care, Giverny is a concentration of Monet's lifelong investment in nurturing nature. The reciprocal relation is the garden's response: it offers unpredictable moments of reverie. Through Monet's overarching design the garden assumes the *power over* in the relationship; it surrounds the viewer – and, in

Monet's case, it almost consumed the artist in his quest to capture in paint the intensity of this relationship and vision (Wat, 2012).

Claude Monet, *The Water Lilies*, 1914-1926 at Le Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris

The grand suite of paintings *The Water Lilies,* at Le Musée de l'Orangerie, were gifted by Monet to the French people to commemorate the end of World War I[14]. Imbued with deep feelings of loss and hope,[15] *The Water Lilies* at Le Musée de l'Orangerie resonate with a depth of observation and understanding of the light, life and energy of wildness in a garden.

In these works, the classical system of representation is challenged by the transition between figuration and abstraction. The traditional references of forward, middle and background are replaced with a focus on the surface of the water, the reflections of the sky and the floating rafts of waterlily pads (Dumas, 2015). This shift from representation to abstraction subverts and compresses the traditional perspectival references, narrowing the depth of field and drawing the focus to the surface of the canvas. Rather than a transparency within the layers that would allow the viewer to enter into the pictorial space, an oscillation between reflection and opacity occurs. The vista in this case shifts from a particular focal point to something less tangible: air and water. The result is that the viewer's eye glides across the water's surface, both horizontally and vertically, without anchorage or solid grounding.

The four large concave canvases surround the viewer in the purpose-built gallery which has a huge central, oval translucent skylight to provide even, natural light. As in *the Garden Room* in Livia's Villa, the viewer steps into an all-encompassing room where the paintings physically surround and dominate the space. After the initial impact of this transition into Monet's oasis, the viewer is compelled to move around the room, backwards and forwards, stepping close to the surface of the painting, and then away to take in the pictorial surface effects and the general planes. Part of the power exchange in this case is the power of motion; the motion of

[14] Monet's obsession with creating and painting this idyllic garden coincided with of one of the darkest hours in Europe, WW1. In fact gunfire from the front was only fifty miles away could be heard at times (Dumas, 2015). The contrast of the horrors of war with this utopian site could not be more pronounced. Monet refused to evacuate and he kept working relentlessly in pursuit of capturing this imagined space of tranquillity and peace. This was his act of defiance and contribution to the resistance.

[15] The willow's weeping branches are symbolic of national mourning.

the viewer who is invited to skim and dip into the detail and apparent simplicity of the painted marks, dabs and splotches of paint, which operate to give form to glistening water and reflections. The agency of the artist is seen through the pure physicality of the scale of the works and the motion of his unique brushwork gestures.

Figure 15: Claude Monet *The Water Lilies: Setting sun; The Clouds*, 1914-1926 – Oil on canvas, installation view, room 1, west and north walls, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris

Monet's use of the grounding device of large trees is similar to the depiction of trees in *The Garden Room*; however, Monet has painted partial trees: the willow's form is open, leaving the base and its height to the viewer's imagination. Unlike Rooker's etching, the image rejects being read from left to right. The image construction has a strong Japanese influence. All the usual devices of horizon lines, boundaries, quantifiable depth and edge have been pushed outside of the pictorial frame (Pierre Wat, 2012).

As art historian and great-grandson of Monet, Philippe Piguet, points out, this "essential development was thus pioneered: raising the flat horizontals of the pond to the vertical in an unprecedented gesture of spatial subversion. The gesture testifies not only to the resolutely innovative character of the waterlily series, but also to the artist's decisive questioning of the traditional field" (2013, p. 21). The abandonment of aerial perspective challenges the normal constants and control of Western pictorial traditions, forcing a negotiation between the viewer and the picture plane whilst oscillating between figuration and abstraction.

The focus shifts between the subject, the waterlily garden, and the sensation and immediacy of a fleeting moment. Owens, citing Diderot, explores this interface between the painting and the viewer, the shifting from the viewer in front of an object (the painting); where you see a vista, a representation of a representation to where another vision is on offer, a vision that is perceived; the sensation of being surrounded by light and colour (Owens, 1992a). This shift from representation of representations to an exploration of light and moment is demonstrated by Monet's obsessive development of the same motif.[16] Monet's repetitive obsession with painting the garden aligns with the concept that the familiarity of the "garden offers precisely the conditions conducive to reverie" (Cooper, 2006, p. 84). The wildness takes the form of Monet's gestural marks, which sit on the threshold of impression and representation and evoke "the space of elsewhere"(Bachelard, 1994, p. 184) - what Treib refers to as the elusive "aesthetic presence in a different form" (Treib, 1979, p. 29). There can be no doubt that Monet was pioneering a new way of perceiving garden imagery. In this case the "aesthetic presence in a different form" is the operation of the surface and viewer's negotiation with the surface.

Here the surface takes on a form of otherness which seductively shrouds the work: it operates like frosting, or icing sugar, focusing the attention to the play of light on the surface. The wildness of the gesture and texture of paint that resonates into this mesh of unclassifiable brushstrokes sit on the surface of the canvas, causing the eye to scan and move across the surface. The ocular effect of this shallow depth of field is perceived as colour field rather than a vista.

To examine and understand the process and alchemy of Monet's surfaces, James Elkins sets up a studio experiment with the assistance of a student to try to recreate Monet's surfaces.

[16] The repetitive motif started with *Haystacks* (1890) series then the *Poplars* (1891), followed by *Cathedrals* in 1894 until we get to the synthesis of all Monet's investigations, which engaged him for the last thirty years of his life the *Water Lilies* (Wat, 2012, p. 11).

His conclusions highlight the precarious balance between control and agency within the paintings' application and materiality.

> As far as I am concerned, (those) two elements are Monet's secret. The paintings are certainly not instantaneous records of nature that they once seemed, but neither are they deliberate products of some academic method.[17] They depend from first to last on two nearly indescribable requirements: the precariously balanced viscosity of the pigment, and a nearly masochistic pleasure in unconfortable, unpredicatable twists and turns. The paintings are narcissistic, to use a word usually reserved for inwardturning twentitieth–century art; they are about the beautiflul moment when the dull oil paste, squeezed from the lead tube, becomes a new substance that is neither liquid, solid, cream, wax, varnish or vaseline; and they are about the body's turning against itself, and within itself, to make shapes that the eye cannot recognize as human marks[18] (Elkins, 2000, pp. 17-18).

What draws the viewer to the surface is the synergy between the controlled malleability of the material of paint and the wildness, chaotic unpredictability or otherness of the gestures. The surface has an unplaceable physicality, which resonates with an intriguing sense of otherness. Although the viewer physically engages with the work – being surrounded, and actively moving closer, to appreciate the cacophony of gestural marks – they are denied entry into the pictorial space. This could partly be attributed to the nature of reflection, yet the shallow depth of field and focus on the play of light on the surface distracts the viewer from their outsider engagement. This garden offers a very specific space of reverie which is locked in the shallow space of the surface through the agency of the paint, with all its wildness slipping in and out of the controlling framework of representation.

Within the framework of authority and wildness, this work is transitional. It is a transition between representation and another world: the otherness of capturing the light and sensation of a garden experience, an experience which is fleeting and untameable. The experience is one of negotiation, where the viewer not only sees the object in front of them, but also engages the mind's eye and imagination to occupy an 'in-between' space of ocular registration and imagination. The wildness in this case is what Monet has seen and transposed into the

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[17] Elkins in this quote footnotes: On instantaneity in Monet, see Steven Levine, "The 'Instant' of Criticism and Monet's Critical Instant," *Arts Magazine 55* no 7 (1981): 114-21

[18] Elkins notes in reference to narcissism that, "A different argument on narcissism is proposed in Rosalind Krauss, "Impressionism: The Narcissism of Light". *Partisan Review* 43 no. 1 (1976): 102-12; and see Steven Levine, *Monet, Narcissus, and Self-Reflection; The Modernist Myth of the Self* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

agency of the paint the uncontrollable imagined space which is activated by the viewer engaging.

Conclusion to Chapter 2

In this chapter I have discussed two key examples of garden sites, Kew and Giverny, with corresponding imagery, Edward Rooker's etching *A View of the Wilderness, with the Alhambra, the Pagoda and the Mosques in the Royal Gardens of Kew* and Claude Monet's *The Water Lilies* at Le Musée de l'Orangerie. The purpose of this is to show that there are two very different ways of viewing and being within these sites and sights: one through vista, a set perspective with defined vantage points, and the other offering an experiential engagement through oscillations between surface and form.

In this chapter Kew Gardens was discussed in light of Warnke's concept of a politicised landscape, an Imperial structure with its signposts and colonial power structures. As a counterpoint, the second example was Monet's Garden in Giverny. His garden is completely encompassing as you walk through the grounds in Giverny and sits outside of the framework of vistas and perimeters and borders. The viewer is immersed within the scene as it is not structured with classic one-point perspectives and vantage points, although some vantage points still exist. What is important about Monet's Garden is the play and movement of light on the surfaces of the foliage and pond: movement is critical to the way the imagery is structured. These are two very different ways of looking at and experiencing gardens: Kew Gardens is controlled and static, whereas we see this idea of wildness and movement in Monet's version. However, Monet's movement is also deeply controlled, the wildness is a perception reinforced by the erratic gestural brushwork of his painted works. The imagery is concerned with the superficial play of surface and the play of light off these surfaces. The viewer steps into a surrounding room at Le Musée de l'Orangerie and immediately registers that they are surrounded by the watery garden, and there are moments in the artwork that give the illusion of deep water. Disrupting the illusion of spatial depth is the agency of the paint's materiality and malleability as it sits on the surface of the canvas. The viewer is continuously renegotiating their position to examine the surface which oscillates between the illusion of form and the movement and light embedded in the application of paint. The act of viewing in Monet's work is a measured oscillation of experience which moves between the

play of brushwork on the surface of the canvas and the illusion of the imagery and watery forms. The movement of the surface and the movement of the viewer transports the moment into one of experience rather than vista.

Underpinning these two exemplars is that idea that the experience of gardens is implicit in the way we view garden imagery. So far, I have discussed four historical exemplars of garden imagery. Within these examples, key structures and consistencies relating to how garden imagery is perceived are beginning to emerge: otherness control, agency, and oscillations. These are tropes that are taken up in the studio methodology. They are also expanded upon in the next chapter through the examination of contemporary artworks.

Chapter 3. Otherness, Control, Agency and Oscillations

Introduction

The discussion thus far has revolved around four historical examples of garden imagery and ideals of utopia or Eden, in which the argument has been evidenced by two key structures, one functioning as *experience*, the other as *vista*. These are dominant historical modes which are familiar. Implicit to our understanding of them is the fluidity between real and imagined garden spaces, and the intrinsic link between garden sites and imagery. I have underlined the political dimension of these implicit understandings by drawing out cultural and structural power relationships, contextualised through the writings of W.T.J. Mitchell, Martin Jay and Martin Warnke. In this chapter I extend this examination of power operating in contemporary depictions of gardens to establish that the Foucauldian conception of power relations remains relevant and serviceable.

To contextualise the relationship between authority and agency into a language of painting, I have undertaken a survey of painterly garden imagery within contemporary practice. During the course of this research, several international exhibitions have been curated, specifically exploring artists' relationship with garden imagery. These include *Painting Paradise: The Art of the Garden* (Aug 2016 - Feb 2017) The Queen's Gallery, UK, and *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse* (2016), Royal Academy, UK. Both UK exhibitions presented a chronological survey of the impact of gardens on artists, while *The Garden*: *End of Times, Beginning of Times,* ARoS Triennial in Aarhus, Denmark (2017) examines mankind's complex relationship with nature over the past, present and future. Additionally, artists and works like Pipilotti Rist's *Mercy Garden Retour Skin (2014),* David Hockney's *The Arrival of Spring* series, Joan Mitchell's *La Grande Vallée* (1983-84), Louise Hearman, Mary Heilmann, Dieggo Mendoza Imbachi, Michael Zaroros, Ken Whisson, Dana Schultz, Rune Bosse, Katherina Grosse and Meg Webster's installation *Concave Room for Bees* all engage with garden imagery in some form. Through categorisation, refinement and analysis of the visual operations of a variety of practitioners, four themes emerge that articulate the power relations within imagery, the surface and the viewer. These themes are otherness, control, agency and oscillations.

However, before I move to contemporary practice, I would like to take a moment to focus specifically on the idea of 'gendering' of the garden. Gender was explicit in the Masaccio *Expulsion from the Garden* image but the idea of the garden as a gendered site is yet to be expanded upon.

The gendered nature of the garden

In the essay *Flowers, Power and Sex,* Robert B. Riley pays specific attention to the gendered character of the garden, noting that within literature the garden is the site where the exotic and erotic can be unleashed and, paradoxically, also contained. Nature is the active force within a garden and is both a metaphor and a site for sexuality. The wildness of the jungle is a symbol of the primal and unrestrained – an exemplar is seen in Gauguin's Polynesian women. At the other extreme, the Victorian tea party, full of restraint and control, is where the lawn is "a symbol of sex-corseted" (1990, p. 67). Riley also refers to the Freudian analysis of the dark northern European forests within fairy tales with "the same fearful sexual allusions" (1990, p. 67) – the imagined. Riley surmises

> the progressive transformation from forest to forest glade, to meadow, to garden, to lawn as a metaphor of increasing control over, or sublimation of, the raw sexual content of nature. In this progression, the garden is middle ground, where sexuality is controlled but still potent and available (1990, p. 67).

Here, the garden is a site of both indulgence and transgression where women, powerless in other settings, can unleash their sexuality to ensnare men. Yet, even in this illusion of female empowerment a subversion is present because the garden is still a controlled artefact, a folly of nature.

Berthe Morisot's *Lilacs at Maurecourt* (1874) and Édouard Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1862-1863).

This subversion of empowerment is reflected also in the limited subject matter available for female artists in the nineteenth century. Women could only paint domestic scenes or decorative art: domestic and decorative were seen as emotional and sentimental as opposed to the important heroic subjects addressed by their male counterparts (Nochlin, 1988). To illustrate the point, I have juxtaposed two garden paintings from the same era, done by two

artists well acquainted with each other's work: Berthe Morisot's *Lilacs at Maurecourt* (1874) and Édouard Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1862-1863). Although these images are formally and structurally similar, the profound difference in the composition and application of the paint can be accounted for by the different gender of the artists. Morisot's painting does not challenge the status quo; it is not confrontational or visually demanding; cultural restraints have controlled the composition even before the image was painted. Here we have a woman painting about being a woman; depicting palpable restraint, both in subject, composition and paint application.

Figure 16: Berthe Morisot, *Lilacs at Maurecourt,* 1874 - Oil on canvas, 50 x 61 cm
Figure 17: Édouard Manet, Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 1862-1863 – Oil on canvas, 208 x 264 cm

Morisot's gesture shows a sensitive touch that is almost evasive; the brush strokes have an all-over urgency and tentativeness, as if trying to build up the whole surface and image simultaneously, capturing a fleeting moment. Unlike Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe,* Morisot's figures are anonymous and non-descript. The image has a quality of acceptance and understanding of the seasons; the three figures appear content, grounded and at home in their environment.

The critical point in juxtaposing the two images is the different approaches to the garden representation. In Morisot's painting, there appears to be a sensitivity and engagement with nature - the figures are part of the garden, part of a greater narrative or circle of life - whereas the garden in Manet's painting is a backdrop, the stage for the real drama about to unfold. The garden setting is subservient to the figures, creating a scene which is intentionally confrontational in its subversion of the voyeuristic gaze. This is in stark contrast to Morisot's garden, which is one of contemplation and engagement rather than objectification and

confrontation. Manet's garden is a compositional prop to frame his image, while Morisot's engagement has an embedded emotional resonance which invites the viewer to engage beyond the surface.

Otherness, Control, Agency and Oscillation

The following contextualisation of the field of contemporary artists has been restricted to a selection of only four paintings, but these were chosen because I consider them to be indicative of larger volumes of work. Through the examination of the work of Marc Quinn, Fiona Lowry, Cecily Brown and Bahar Behbahani, I expand on the tropes of otherness, control, agency and, in particular, the idea of oscillation.

Quinn confronts otherness through his subject matter. Giant hyper-realistic flower paintings are orchestrated to combine blooms from different seasons and habitats to present something outside of nature. Control and restraint are shown in the work of Lowry, formally through a limited palette, a restricted vocabulary of marks and tight compositional cropping; all of which increase the latency and mystique of the image. Agency is exemplified through the seemingly erratic gestural work of Brown, which refuses containment in pictorial space. Finally, the multi-layered, ambiguous work of Behbahani aptly demonstrates oscillations in her deeply personal and covertly political work.

All four works have informed my studio experimentation, not in a direct mimetic fashion but in identifying compositional devices, painterly mechanisms, strategic colour choice, layering, erasure, density and spatial relationships in order to project an awareness of otherness, control, agency and/or oscillation throughout my work.

Otherness, from the perspective of something outside of the norm, forces a perceptional shift from the status quo. I look at how otherness operates formally with colour, light and perspective; the concept of otherness is strongly aligned with gender, politics and culture. The gendered aspect I identified first in my discussion of Masaccio's *Expulsion from the Garden* in Chapter 1. The gendering of the garden culturally resonates with the idea of wildness being constrained (Riley, 1990). In Masaccio's image, otherness in relation to gender is clearly seen in the marginalisation and shame of Eve covering herself while fleeing the garden. Likewise,

control operates with the Imperial vista, the hierarchical positioning and cropping of elements and, as Owens argues, the illustrative nature and context of representation.

Where agency is imbued with power it works against this illustrative nature, allowing the materiality of the paint and the action of the artist to have more influence than pictorial representation. Agency can be associated with wildness in painting due to the erratic nature of the gestural marks, while the shift from representation to surface texture and movement is also conducive to a more immersive pictorial spatial reading. This is an engagement with the imagination. Finally, oscillation is more difficult to identify because it in some ways defies definition. Oscillation is where the image shifts, it has a virtual movement within the power relations, perspective, interpretation and meanings of the work. Oscillation is the most subjective of all the tropes because the ocular flipping between elements is dependent on the viewer's engagement.

Otherness - Marc Quinn

Figure 18: Marc Quinn, *Hyper Nova (In the Night Garden)*, 2010 - Oil on canvas, 168.5 x 254.5 cm
Image: Courtesy of Artist

Marc Quinn's painting *Hyper Nova (in the Night Garden)*, 2010, is spectacular and confrontational. At 168.5 x 254.5 cm its scale is overpowering and heroic, operating in the

tradition of a grand history painting but, in reality, it is simply a floral still life. The direct, front-on vista of repeated flower shapes in saturated psychedelic colour appears simplistic. However, in combination, the effect at macro scale shifts the viewing experience into a delirious otherness.

The process of image development is a subversion of the classic still life that is modified and commodified through the advances of the twenty-first century. Quinn purchases exotic flowers and fruit from across the globe and arranges them in an unnatural context, without location and season. He photographs and manipulates the palate in Photoshop and then paints. "The result is a sort of looking-glass world in which the focus of flowers seems to fall apart and different images start to suggest themselves, as in a hallucination. (…) So, to me the flower market is emblematic of the way that human desire has changed our relationship to nature. (…) The effect is of a strange, futuristic dystopia" (Quinn, 2010, p. 108).[19]

The giant psychedelic orchids are meticulously accurate in their painted detail. The scale and inverted colour palette are a confusing mix of realism and illusion. This is reinforced by what David Batchelor (2000) describes as our cultural predisposition to associate highly saturated flamboyant colours with frivolity, fantasy and unchecked emotion. He says that such display must be mistrusted and questioned. Quinn uses these devices to configure a portal into a fantasy world that evokes a sense of otherness.

The first impression of this work is that it is very flat, it is graphic in quality, and the edges are sharp and even. The objects are consistent and uniform. Like a wallpaper, it reads like a decorative pattern. The composition has a subtle suggestion of a horizon line in which you can see snippets of light apricot, suggestive of the sun setting just above the granulated earth foreground. The amplification of scale, combined with the overlapping and stacking of elements, similar to the flaps in theatrical stage backdrops, distort the depth of field. This distortion and disorientation is suggestive of an otherness in the spatial relationships.

[19] Quinn's flower painting series can be seen to loosely reference the Psychedelic art movement of the 1960's, where Eden was a chief tenet. Often drug induced (LSD), the 1960's counter-culture offered an alternative reality which could be seen as a form of otherness, having strong associations with the ideal of Eden/Utopia, free love, harmony and an imagined (or drug induced) utopia/dystopia.

The attention to detail and stitching together of self-contained zones is similar to the Brueghel *Garden of Eden*; however, with Quinn the knowledge-power is not limited to the mastery of observation and rendering, but also exists in the mediation of digital technology to present something as common as a still life of flowers in a totally new way.

Underpinning the image is a latent sexuality – the image is full of hybrid flowers; the background shows a giant black orchid which epitomises glasshouse genetic engineering and hybrid sterility. The sexuality is unseen but felt; it is implied rather than explicit. This alternative reading suggests other connotations. Otherness is felt through the eroticism of the colour and the blatant display of the flowers' pollination repositories.

Our physicality in relationship to the flowers is challenged; these flowers are larger than our faces. In fact, rather than bending down to smell a beautiful flower, the suggestion is that the flowers are bending down to smell the viewer. This scale and role subversion shifts the viewer from surveying a vista to engaging in an intimate experiential relationship with the work, unsettling and dwarfing the viewer.

The surface is devoid of all traces of the artist's presence: the application of paint is even, there are no brush marks and, in some areas, it even appears airbrushed. The intensity of the pigment holds the promise of lush, rich oil paint, but as you get closer to the surface the objects lose their solidity and appear more like stains which are imbedded into the fibres of the canvas. The surface has a transient nature; the solidity of form is projected through the minutest amount of pigment. The only sheen is on a few edges of the petals where more layers of medium and pigment have been applied.

Originally shown at London's White Cube Gallery in 2010, the painting acted as a backdrop or landscape to the confrontational figurative sculptures exploring gender and identity, *Allanah, Buck, Catman, Chelsea, Michael, Pamela and Thomas*.

Figure 19: Marc Quinn, Installation shot White Cube Gallery of *Allanah, Buck, Catman, Chelsea, Michael, Pamela and Thomas* exhibition, 2010. Photo: Roger Wooldridge, accessed 25 March 2015 http://whitecube.com/exhibitions/marc_quinn_allanah_buck_catman_chelsea_michael_pamela_and_thomas_hoxton_square_2010/

This exhibition operates as an oversized wunderkabinet. A show of shiny, life-size and larger than life sculptures of people who have all been surgically manipulated to change their sexuality or appearance. The suite of large floral paintings provide the viewer with visual relief; however, the engagement rapidly dissolves from an oasis and becomes just as confrontational as the sculptural works. Quinn has manipulated our understanding of the garden construct, by using a deliberate installation strategy, whereby the conventions of painting and popular culture are combined with high-key, hot, saturated colour, fantasy, and digitally enhanced graphics. The outcome is a highly orchestrated socio-political agenda. The fluctuating perspective of the work is key to the power play in the image. The horizontal and vertical axes give way and the painting vacillates to form an engulfing wave that overshadows the viewer.

Control - Fiona Lowry

Fiona Lowry's painting *I act as the tongue of you* (2008) does not strictly sit within the garden genre, as it operates more like a landscape. It has a grand vista structure of foreground and mid-ground; however, the far-ground is denied. Lowry has created a subjective reading of the landscape, through her creative interpretation. Normally what differentiates the space of a landscape and a garden is the sense of control within the garden, and in this instance Lowry has converted the landscape into a garden through her assertion of creative control. What is relevant here is the overshadowing sense of control within its bridled wildness. I have chosen Lowry's work because of the distinct feeling of domestic malevolence, which is conveyed

through the palette and application of the paint. The first impressions of the warm pinks, oranges, purple, and violets of Lowry's landscapes are pleasing and have a calming decorative ambiance. Yet, on closer examination, a subversive intensity becomes apparent.

The fascination of Fiona Lowry's paintings lies not so much in what they reveal, but what they conceal. Lowry's work is not as confrontational or active as the Quinn or Brown[20] examples; however, they pulsate energy in their stillness, like the tension before a thunderstorm.

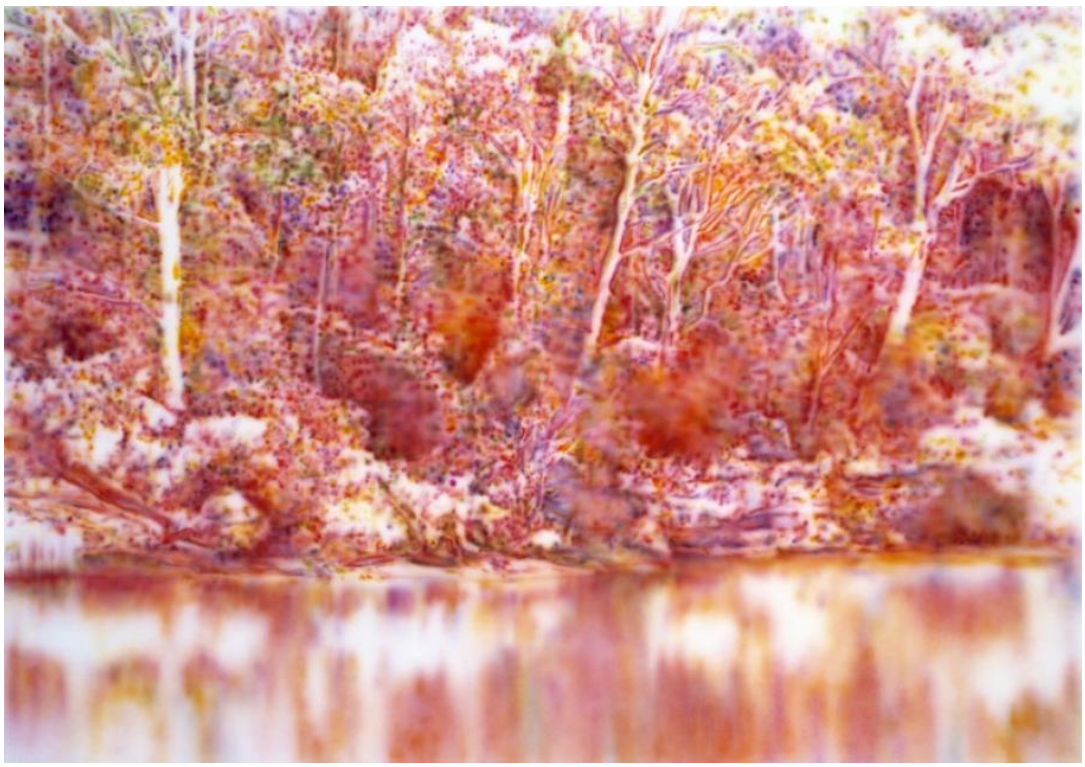

Figure 20: Fiona Lowry, *I act as the tongue of you*, 2008 - Acrylic on canvas, 152 x 220 cm
Image: Courtesy of Artist

Looking at the work, *I act as the tongue of you* (2008), is like standing before a large wide screen. This work acts like a panorama. At the same time, a vibration of light and colour sit on a surface, interrupting this reading and presenting an unreal space that references the natural world with an artificial or even toxic malevolence.

The compositional structure mimics that of traditional Dutch landscape painting, where the picture plane is separated by the bottom third horizon line. Typically, this separation is of the vast atmospheric sky above a low flat stretch of land, yet here structure has been subverted

[20] The Cecily Brown work *Red Me No Green* I examine later in this chapter

with the top two thirds becoming and encroaching a dense wall of vegetation. The bottom third in Lowry's painting has more of an atmospheric abstract field painting quality to it, but this too is deceptive. The painting flips within this reflective surface, which operates in two ways: the first is the illusion of depth; the second is the simultaneously flattening and pushing forward of the surface. The palette is predominately warm oranges and pinks, with hints of sap green, with thin touches of burnt sienna and yellow ochre, which create a mirage-like haze of intense summer heat. Like Quinn, the application of paint is indiscernible: it has no traces of the artist's hand, the process is one of layering a fine mist of pigment through an airbrush, a technique that builds up the form through tight tonal shifts. Reinforcing the pre-mediated control of the process is the repetitive, meditative patterning of the image, a process that appears de-personalising and calculated.

The top two-thirds of the image shows impenetrable dense foliage. The depth of field is compressed and most of the image is blurred. The vacillation between areas out of focus and within, operates like a double register that is not quite aligned. This optical distancing or screening strengthens the un-locatable presence. The visual vibration of the foliage also lends to the scene an intense sense of foreboding and hidden danger, suggesting something hiding, watching, or even waiting. The deep water acts as a barrier to the viewer, a warning not to enter, not to disrupt, to let deep secrets lie undisturbed, which threaten to overpower.

Overall, *I act as the tongue of you* is a disorientating scene whilst at the same time familiar. Within the psychological charge it has this sense of the other which is reluctant to be named. The utopian ideal is directly put to question. The compositional and spatial screening ensure an element of voyeurism: somehow Lowry implicates the viewer as outsider and intruder. The pigmentation operates like camouflage, built up from transparent and semi-transparent layers which merge to become a flat, bland, almost banal surface with no set focal point. In the midst of the strained stillness, a harrowing latent violence and terror reverberates. This is a place one would not want to occupy when night falls.

Agency - Cecily Brown

> These paintings are all about having just the right amount of control, …
> Let them go wild, and then rein in the energy. As Francis Bacon said, the whole point is to harness the energy.
>
> Cecily Brown quoted by Kazanjian (2015)

In 2015 Brown embarked on a collaborative project resulting in a series of small paintings (no larger than 44 x 32 cm) to accompany a fictional work *The English Garden*, written by Jim Lewis. I have chosen just one of these works *Red Me No Green* (2008) as emblematic of agency within painted garden imagery. In reality, I could have chosen any from this series. Paradoxically, the series was less physically demanding in its execution than Brown's usual oeuvre; she sat at a desk and scaled down her brushes to do them – bringing an intimacy to the works. Nevertheless, the work embodies an incredible energy and physicality. An element of containment projected from the actual edge of the support – the frame – gives the appearance of the outer frame squeezing inward with an even pressure to restrain the paint from escaping outside the canvas. Beyond these edges you step into this cacophony of shifting shapes and marks which deny the eye any locatable bearings. With time, when viewing this work I can discern three separate horizontal bands. The top band is dominated by larger blocks of lighter tones and tints of colour, hints of yellow ochre, fleshy pinks and warm lime. These marks are larger than the rest of the marks on the canvas and are closer in tone so they read as regressing spatially. Likewise, the lower zone (on the bottom edge) has predominantly neutral greys contrasted with pure orange and lime green so they tend to sweep low and forward – almost scooping the viewer into the larger central band.

In the central section the wildness of the paint takes over – the marks slip from abstraction into figuration and then back into passages of colour. The constant tussle between figure and form delivers an undercurrent of anxiety to the reading of the image. The eye is drawn to the half-ellipse shape, a high key white form framed by contrasting dark brown on the far left of the central band. The work glimmers and frustrates simultaneously - one moment you catch glimpses of recognisable forms and the next they dissolve.

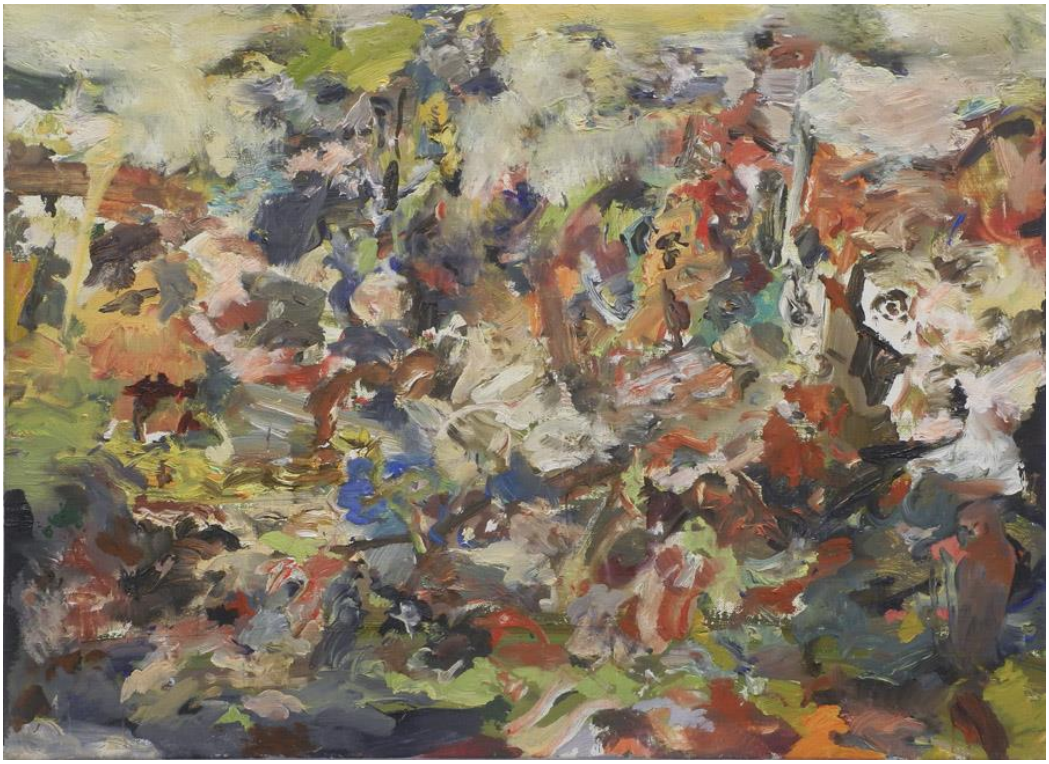

Figure 21: Cecily Brown, *Red Me No Green*, 2008 - Oil on linen, 31.75 x 43.18 cm
Image: Courtesy of Artist

Rather than a vista, the image operates as a cohesive, amorphous form that activates every possible spatial reading. The activation is relational: relational to the position of the gestural marks touching and overlapping with each other, relational to the intensity and position of hues, and relational to the ocular movement and focus of the viewer. Looking from Owens' perspective, the power of this image is not in what it represents, but in what the image does - it refuses to be contained. The energy of the gestural marks amplifies this power and draws the viewer to step closer to the surface. Considering that the work's physical marks were made from the wrist rather than the whole arm, this work packs a punch – both viscerally and positionally: it is difficult for the eye to stay static. Note that none of the marks are repetitive or patterned, which reinforces the reading of untameable energy.

In an interview with Rolf Lauter at the opening of her first survey exhibition at Kunsthalle, Mannheim, Brown spoke about her fascination with how an inanimate object, paint on a canvas, could elicit a visceral response (2004). This visceral response I believe is congruent with the agency of paint through gesture, texture, unpredictability, viscosity, speed, and density. It bypasses our cognitive analysis of imagery to a reactionary, physiological response.

Much of the discourse about Brown's work is focused on her gender and the overt sexuality and objectification of her subject matter; for example, Jane Harris wrote the following in the 2002 edition of *Vitamin P* in the context of discussing the heroised Abstract Expressionist rhetoric:

> Enter Cecily Brown some thirty-plus years later, who despite the prolific and varied history of painting since then, is immediately situated in relation to such work as some bastard female heir. Articles, interviews, and television appearances have attested to this, and even the artist ironically acknowledges the comparison: "It used to be said the men painted with their dicks. I'm kind of in that tradition, except I don't know whose I'm painting with." Her statement nonetheless reveals itself as a refusal to engage in gendered notions of bravado as well as dismissal of arcane ideas about the nature of expressive painting (Harris, 2002, p. 46).

This positioning of the work is so entrenched within the institution of the male gaze (Nochlin, 1988). Consciously or sub-consciously, the viewer is still influenced by the authority of the male gaze and it is this choice or lack of choice that female artists have to subvert and confront within their practice. In the case of Brown, the materiality of the paint is sexual, and the reason why people find her work so difficult. In this particular work, the sexuality is not represented pictorially but it is embodied in the materiality and energy of the paint.

So far, I have discussed the power play through the agency of the material and the painter from the perspective of the viewer which is only activated when a viewer chooses to engage with the image. This encompasses the relationship with the representational qualities of the image, the surface of the image, the cultural conditioning of the viewer and the space of imagination - between the viewer and the image. However, another power play also resonates within the agency of this work. That is the wrestle between the artist and the paint. This dance between maker and material is like a chess game, each move determines the next. In such an energetic intensity, keeping the intimate English garden like quality is a balance between allowing the wildness of the paint to obscure figurative readings without being becoming prescriptive. In essence, it is a striving for the threshold, where all the visual possibilities are kept open.

Oscillations - Bahar Behbahani

> The Persian garden connotes romance. Vaguely to most, to some picturesquely imagined, redolent with roses of Shiraz, singing nightingales and tapering cypresses. …yet it is more significant than that, too: for it, represents one of the world's great garden styles. The epitome and perhaps the origin of the formal garden.
>
> Donald Wilber, The Persian Garden, 1940

Inspired by research on the double life of scholar and spy Donald Wilber, Bahar Behbahani's exhibition *Garden Coup* (2016) visually demonstrates and subverts the ethos and structure of the Persian garden. Traditionally a walled oasis, the Persian garden is a hidden paradise that is both exclusive and seductive. This is a place of calming beauty, symmetry, designed for both pleasure and contemplation. Behbahani is an Iranian-born artist who lives and works in New York. The Persian garden is a reoccurring theme in Behbahani's work. The *Garden Coup* series has a deeply personal, cultural and political resonance that entwines the additional complexity and irony of Wilber's[21] influence on the Iranian cultural icon, the Persian garden.

> "The Persian garden is within our lifestyle", Behbahani said of Iranians. "It's always there. It's a very influential imaginary world in our mind". She explained that the Persian carpet, familiar to Westerners, represents "another form of Persian garden — you feel like you are in your own garden, even if you're poor. You have your own corner of garden in your house" (Jones, 2017).

For Behbahani the Persian garden holds a significant place in Iranians' personal and shared history: it is full of betrayal and beauty. The garden carries a duality. It is something sacred and romantic, yet it is also scarred and emblematic of loss. It is a hybrid space, both a private, privileged space and a public space. Like poetry, it is shared amongst the Iranian people's collective memory (Byrd, Cathy 2017).

Report to London[22] is a window-sized multi-layered composition in landscape format, measuring 137.16 x 182.88 cm. The magenta veil suggests sheer curtains drawn or ripped, hanging in front of a dirty glass window; it appears to have been smeared in an attempt to clarify or obscure the view.

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[21] Wilber was the Western expert on Persian gardens and used his credentials as guise to get assess to Iran and subvert the first democratically elected Iranian Prime Minster Mohammad Mosaddegh in the 1953 coup.

[22] Please note the analysis of this image is limited to a mediated experience as I have only seen this painting via the internet, consequently I cannot discern the luminosity or the absorption of light falling on the surface.

Figure 22: Bahar Behbahani, *Report to London*, 2015–16 - Mixed media on canvas, 137.16 x 182.88 cm
Image: Courtesy of Artist

In *Report to London* the top third and right side are dominated by what appears to be a transparent pour of Rose Madder and Perylene Crimson paint which sits in the foreground. The mid and far ground have variations of green, brown and light blue tones, that while appearing quite abstract, are suggestive of a distant mountain range with a lush green field or vast lake in the mid to front edge of the canvas. Interspersed throughout the composition are calligraphic white lines that suggest fabric patterning or contour lines on a geographical map. The other distinct feature is the dark khaki lace-like markings in the top section, which evoke the mountainscapes of ancient oriental scrolls, which dissolve into drips and stains. Another delicate element unifying the composition is the thinly veiled hand-scribed Iranian text in horizontal lines, which fade in and out of focus.

What is striking about the image is the smeared burnt sienna wipes which physically demonstrate the action of dragging pigment across the surface. The viewer vacillates between observing an image and the suggested sensual action of smearing the paint. The colour of the smear evokes oxidised blood; the browns, deep murky magentas and the rose are like veils (Rodney, 2016). The visual oscillation is provoked by the combination of ambiguity, the heavy loading of motif, the visceral bodily palette, and the entwining of delicate marks and robust

semi-transparent gestures. These tropes support the deepening of the atmosphere, imbuing the composition with a smouldering scene of frustrated latency.

Arts writers and critics Step Rodney and Bensie Vasvani bring yet another layer to reading the work. Rodney focuses on the contingent nature of historical accounts and the tenuous position of scrutiny. In discussing the paintings, he states;

> They are enticing to look at, but resist interpretation. I'm told there are site plans of gardens hidden within them, and floral patterns of 19th-centry illuminated books, and architectural motifs. I suppose I have to believe the gallery, because I can't see them exactly (Rodney, 2016) .

Behbahani's practice is well known for its provocative nature, addressing issues of culture, gender, memory and loss (Vasvani, 2016). These images are heavily loaded and coded, suggesting that the full extent of mystery, perhaps, may never be revealed. I respond to these works as a cultural outsider. This body of work is not orchestrated to be part of the xenophobic geo-political conflict, but as an intelligent investigation to gain understanding of the cultural, historical and political impact of the long-romanticised motif of the Persian garden on the identity and perspective of an Iranian female artist. The image is loaded with symbolic motifs, filtered light and gestural veiling that oscillates between seductive beauty and latent violence; marking the duality of betrayal and beauty of Iranians sacred gardens.

Discussing Behbahani's *Persian Gardens,* international arts curator Cathy Byrd concludes,

> Belying her formalist approach, she seems to be illuminating the conflicted and tenuous nature of self-realisation, painting scenarios where the pursuit of beauty-couched in the aesthetics of seductive exoticism-might compel us to mask our real identity to satisfy what we believe to be our deepest desires (Byrd, Cathy, 2014).

This particular work is complex in its conceptual oscillation, with layers and nods to powerful geo-political agendas and to the emotive personal romance of a hidden garden and utopian ideal. Similar to the historical examples used in Chapters 1 and 2, Behbahani's garden is both real and imagined. The experience of these images is deeply informed by the structures of traditional Persian gardens; however, in this case it is not a vista she is presenting. Instead, this work is a meditative experience that grapples with the otherness of being an Iranian woman, the cultural and political tensions of that identity, and the memory and loss of her cultural and personal Persian paradise.

Conclusion - Chapter 3

This chapter began with a comparison of the work of Morisot and Manet in order to discuss gender bias and gender relationships within garden imagery. As in the Kew and Giverny examples, the critical difference in this pairing is argued through relationship of the viewer to the garden. In Morisot's *Lilacs at Maurecourt,* the garden is an integral part of the composition and the figures are part of the garden. The overall effect is that the viewer is drawn into the garden, stepping into the shaded soft grass, whereas in Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* the garden appears as a stage set. The viewer is a spectator to the vista and, in this case, the viewer receives the gaze of the nude. The garden is subservient to the subject and the composition operates from a position of *power over*, reinforced with a return of the direct gaze.

In applying the premise of gendered relationships to the garden, some interesting parallels can be drawn within contemporary practice. Manet and Quinn are almost identical in their operation, a frontal confrontational vista. Here, the gender is objectified - something we view rather than engage with. The spatial relationships are arranged, controlled and shallow, with an overall sensation that the pictorial space is projecting outwards and resisting entry.

Lowry, Brown and Behbahani do not have the same spectatorial, vista approach. Their artworks offer a gendered relationship that is felt rather than observed. The gendering in Lowry's work is subversive: the reflection on the water's surface resist entry however, the abstraction of the vista implies a seductively erotic colour field. Both Brown and Behbahani's paintings prioritise a visceral engagement over surveying a vista: the kinetic rawness of Brown's surface seduces the viewer into a primal engagement, whereas Behbahani's work teases and draws the viewer into a deeper emotive response. This engagement is not limited to a gendered position as it is deeply entwined with cultural and political forces. In all three cases the garden is felt as some sort of promise or potentiality, which is subjectively revealed.

Otherness, control, agency and oscillations are key tropes which have been identified through the examination of the paintings of Marc Quinn - *Hyper Nova*, Fiona Lowry - *I act as the tongue of you*, Cecily Brown – *Red Me No Green*, and Bahar Behbahani – *Report to London.* This research has found these tropes to be consistent within garden imagery. The challenge of this

categorisation of painterly operations is that they do not work in isolation. The operations of each of these works fluctuate between these four tropes. Additionally, these tropes do not only operate formally - I found this particularly in the exemplar of oscillation demonstrated in Behbahani's artwork. In theoretical terms, oscillation is also emblematic of the negotiation between power relations, the Foucauldian *power over* and *power to*, and the inherent tension of binaries, particularly the gendered bias of garden imagery, which I have associated with the spectatorial vista and the embedded experiential mediation.

In the following chapter, I dissect the formal operations of otherness, control, agency and oscillations through my studio practice. By intensive analysis of these contemporary works I have been able to propose studio tests that interrogate the limits and threshold of these tropes before they disintegrate or transform. The chapter uses the four tropes as key identifiers within the research trajectory. Within each trope I discuss practical approaches and use key examples to describe how these tropes became a studio methodology.

Chapter 4. Methodology - (studio practice)

Introduction

Principally within the methodology chapter, the emphasis is on the material and the visual operations of the studio research. This chapter is based on reflections and is written in the first person because of my personal engagement with the studio process. The analysis is not chronological but focuses on key examples and significant turning points in the studio research. The sustaining impetus of the studio methodology has been to locate the slippage points of all the key formal operations which I have found to intersect and cross-over in garden imagery. The intention has been to imbue the artworks with an oscillating visual negotiation that is indicative of the nature-culture relationship within contemporary practice. To clarify what I identify as culture, I am extending culture to include cultural practice, which within this studio research is examined through the medium of paint.

As indicated through the contemporary examples discussed in Chapter 3, I have isolated and segmented the four key methodologies and their operation into sub-categories. Otherness is segmented into colour, light, surface, the figure/ground relationship and the desire of longing to be wild. Control encompasses integrating boundary, edge, form and materials. Agency includes paint application, the gesture, pouring of paint and fluidity. Finally, Oscillations comprises colour, figure/ground relationship, abstraction and figuration, the real and imagined and the perspectives of macro and micro.

This segmentation of the methodologies is necessary to discuss the studio research; however, in reality they do not operate in isolation and are deeply entwined, often reinforcing and contravening each other – the outcome being a transient, fluid engagement with the imagery.

4.1. Otherness

Otherness in Colour

In *Chromophobia,* David Batchelor identifies the unspoken bias and prejudice that the West has culturally held towards colour, both consciously and unconsciously. From antiquity to the

present, Batchelor proposes, "colour has been systematically marginalized, reviled, diminished and degraded" (2000, p. 22). The underpinning for this aversion is found in two mindsets: one, that colour is presented as part of something 'foreign' – what I recognise in my research as other; for example, female, exotic, gay, primal, unrefined or irrational. Secondly, that colour is superficial, cosmetic, a secondary experience, and hence a distraction and dangerous (2000, p. 23).

Another thread of Batchelor's argument in *Chromophobia* is linked to Roland Barthes' remarkable description of colour as 'a kind of bliss' (2000, p. 32). Referencing the counter-culture movement where psychedelia played a major role, Batchelor explores the heightened awareness of colour in drug culture, linking it to the shift from being natural to becoming synthetic – here, other is the alternative to the real[23]. This association of colour as something other, an imagined or subconscious space is central to my project. As the project progressed, the emotive nature of colour became strategic through being contrary in character; that is, resonating with the notion of strange yet familiar, comfortable but disorienting, organic whilst synthetic - colour played an intricate part.

I have been strongly influenced by the video installation of Richard Mosse's work, *The Enclave* (2012), and I limited my palette at the beginning of this project to an infra-red range. As Mosse is interested in exposing the invisible, he deliberately selected a colour palette generated from the discontinued US military cold war Kodak Aerochrome film.

Figure 23: Richard Mosse, *Love Is The Drug*, 2012, digital c-print, 127 x 243.84 cm

[23] Hollywood reinforced this interpretation with many films portraying the real in monochrome, with the altered states of dreams, fantasy, and the subconscious in Technicolor. *The Wizard of Oz* is a classic example of this, where Kansas is portrayed as a grey, monochrome existence, with the fantasy of Oz seen in vibrant Technicolor.

The Enclave is essentially a war documentary, filmed in infra-red, where the scenery has a post-apocalyptic presence. The otherness of colour implicit in this work suggests a landscape made mutant, that cannot come to terms with what has happened; it is in a state of post-traumatic stress and in essence crying after genocide. However beautiful and seductive, it is also uncomfortable. The work is haunting and still affects me years later.

I was curious to test how painting an infra-red scene of a garden could affect the reading of garden imagery. I discovered that rather than exposing the invisible, the medium of paint disassociated itself from the authoritative documentary mode and transformed the image into an imagined fanciful place. In this example, *Pandani 5,* 2014, the strong contrast, edge and rich warm red of the bottom section of the composition is hostile: it pushes forward and is suggestive of an aggressive emotional charge. This is strangely juxtaposed with the lighter more flamboyant application of pinks in the top half, which is reminiscent of a playful Rococo style.

Figure 24: Penelope Burnett, *Pandani 5*, 2014 - Oil on Masonite, 120 x 120cm

In *Pandani 5,* the colour palette sits in an unusual place of otherness: it is not the range of warm, cool, bright and dull greens you would expect in a garden. Here, the colour range is limited to saturated, hot, analogous pinks and oranges, evocative of something foreboding like

the palette before a massive fire storm. Batchelor termed this effect 'Chromophobia',[24] where the reading of colour is both dangerous and fantastical. The strangeness of this image is the coupling of Rococo whimsy and the otherworldly danger of the colour. The colour reinforces the menacing direct pathway, due to the high saturation and ambiguity in the dark, depthless shadows. The skyline is disorientating because of the deep and detached pictorial space. It remains elusive due to the lack of a clearly linked transition between foreground and background. Overall, the otherness in this image is constructed by the refusal to deeply engage with the space; the viewer remains an outsider.

Otherness in Light

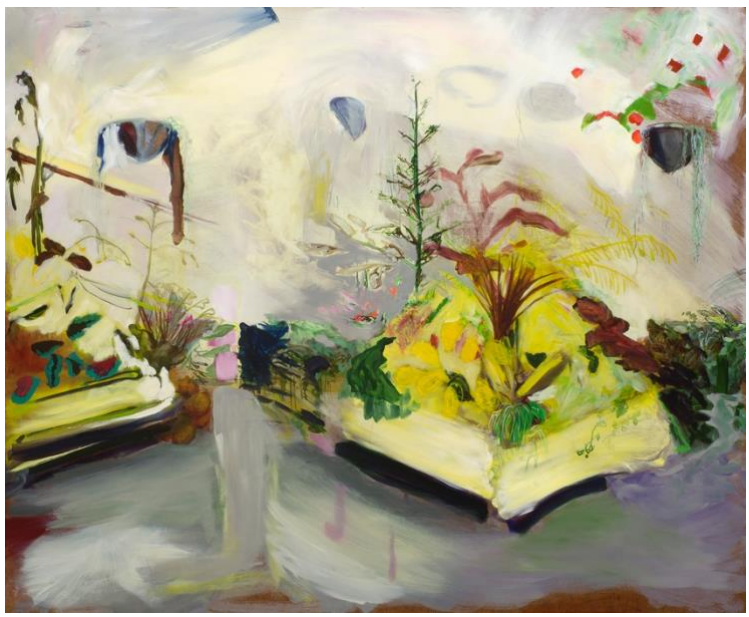

Figure 25: Penelope Burnett, *Not So Conservatorium*, 2016 - Oil on Masonite, 110 x 90 cm

Light traditionally articulates form, giving depth and weight. The light in the painting *Not So Conservatorium,* 2016, is amorphous. It appears to be internal and even, reminiscent of florescent lighting, yet its direction is indeterminate. The ground appears to be reflective and fluid, the yellow garden beds appear to glow from within, whilst the shadows heighten the ambiguity rather than provide depth. These elements suggest otherness in light. Here, the light works against the form by projecting a weightlessness; the greasy grey reflective floor

[24] "Chromophobia manifests itself in the many and varied attempts to purge colour from culture, to devalue colour, to diminish its significance, to deny its complexity […] In one, colour is regarded as alien and therefore dangerous; in the other it is perceived merely as a secondary quality of experience, and thus unworthy of serious consideration. Colour is dangerous, or it is trivial, or it is both."(Batchelor, 2000, pp. 22 - 23)

merges into a wall-less, buttery, light-filled ceiling. This imagery, combined with the floating motifs, presents the uncertainty of depth and, as a result, the solid garden beds hover in space.

The suspension in space coupled with the disjuncture between the figure and ground relationship in *Not So Conservatorium,* 2016, strangely amalgamates the two different approaches discussed in the Morisot and Manet paintings, which generate a gendered reading of garden imagery. Here, the garden beds act like the figures in Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe,* where both Manet's figures, and my garden beds, are disjointed from their surroundings, resulting in a feeling of autonomy and projection forward beyond the surface. *Not so Conservatorium*, 2016, also segues with Morisot's *Lilacs at Maurecourt,* by placing the defined beds within Morisot's amorphous ground. My aim was for the viewer to be drawn into this strange encompassing environment, to shift the experience from vista to visual negotiation. The aim of this work was to combine both devices, a contemplative engagement merged with a disjointed objectification of the figurative elements, to create an active tension and uncertainty in the image.

Otherness in Surface

The surface in *Pioneers Memorial Garden (Royal Botanical Garden Sydney)*, 2017, oscillates between simulated and actual texture. The composition of the work is structured around a large oval ellipse in the top section of the painting, which then appears to release a reservoir of treacle-like viscous paint on the bottom edge, suggestive of a lava flow on the surface. The attention shifts from the form to the formation – to the application and surface of the work. The aim was to create a subversion of gravity in this work, where the drips of some of the paint defy gravity by flowing upwards as well as down. The combination of fluorescent saturated synthetic pigments ranging from densely opaque to transparent are suggestive of something toxic and otherworldly – shifting from the organic to chemically industrial, to something synthetic and unnatural.

Figure 26: Penelope Burnett, *Pioneers Memorial Garden* (Royal Botanical Gardens Sydney), 2017 and detail - Oil on Masonite, 121 x 112 cm

A subsequent development that resulted from this work was the activation of the Masonite ground in the top circular section, which happened when the surface was sanded back. Traces of the painted gestural marks remain evident after the sanding; however, the Masonite is operating as the form rather than the support. This erasure juxtaposed with the thick glutinous paint pours aims to draw the viewer's eye closer to the micro view, rather than forcing a broader, vista-like view.

Figure 27: Penelope Burnett, Research diagram of axis dynamic in *Pioneers Memorial Garden*

The above diagram highlights the intended direction of viewers eyes in this image. The gestural boundary of the looping path invites the viewer to hover in a circular motion, skimming the surface. The bottom section aims to draw the eye into the ellipse. Yet, a restriction in the inner sanctum of the composition is created through the erasure and exposure of the bare Masonite, which oscillates between vortex and the active marks on the surface. The aim was to be swept up and hover above, ungrounded in a bird's eye perspective. This elevated perspective enables the eye to travel; the eye is invited to the central ellipse, yet is denied entrance due to the unbroken ellipse edge.

This unstable viewing position also has political overtones. The inspiration for the artwork, the *Pioneers Memorial Garden*, was built as part of the 150th anniversary celebrations of Australia in 1938. When the garden was opened by Lady Gowrie, the *Age* (Melbourne, 4 February 1938) reported:

> When the wonderful pageant, the decorations and the excitement of the 150th celebrations have become just a memory, the memorial garden to pioneers will remain as a living inspiration to the women of Sydney. Set as it is on the heights of the botanical gardens, there is an unparalleled view of the blue harbour, the first glimpse, no doubt, of this new land gained by those woman pioneers to which the garden is dedicated. Following the opening of the garden visiting delegates and overseas and interstate visitors were entertained by Lady Gowrie at Admiralty House. The only man among the 300 woman guests was the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie (Monument Australia, 2017)

When I visited the garden, this "living inspiration to the women of Sydney" was overgrown and marginalised. The contrast of wild unruliness is what drew me to the sight after meandering through the rest of the well-manicured gardens. This meandering movement represents an otherness to the physicality contained within the brickwork walls and paved pathway. This garden projected a feeling, a visceral experience rather than a visual vista. The garden could not be experienced until you entered the path. Unlike the other garden sections, you could perceive from a distance the structural formats and approach to gain a macro perspective. I found the experience of this garden hard to articulate and hard to capture, the experience resonated through elemental consciousness; one of grief and defence concurrently.

Figure 28: Penelope Burnett, Research photograph of *Pioneers Memorial Garden (Royal Botanical Gardens Sydney)*, 7 October 2016

The historical context of an exclusive celebration of gentrifying pioneer women in a hostile environment sits in paradox with the current spatial relationships; the seduction and elemental rawness of the organic surface juxtaposed with the self-referential looping of pictorial space. A rendering of something that cannot be understood, yet at the same time is felt. Reminiscent of Bahar Behbahani's *Report to London,* the veils of colour, visceral activation of the surface and encoded subject matter load the image within a threshold of otherness.

Otherness in the Figure/Ground Relationship

Figure 29: Penelope Burnett, *Deliverance &/or Expulsion No.1*, 2015 – Oil on Masonite, 60 x 60 cm

Deliverance &/or Expulsion No.1, 2015 is based on the original Masaccio painting *Expulsion from the Garden* (Figure 1). Here, I was interested in shifting the focus from the key figures in the narrative (Adam and Eve) to the garden (the ground): the ground becomes the protagonist. In this painting, the background appears to envelope the figures. The dominant feature of the work is the organic forms flanking the sides of the composition; these have the stronger and larger contrasts of cool lights and darks. An activation and energy is suggested throughout the garden canopy and through the syncopated sharp gestural marks, whilst the figures are rendered with smoother tonal shifts, appearing static in contrast. Although some marks are illustrative and clumsy, this work was pivotal in the project: it shifted my studio testing to focus on the material, application and surface of the painting as the key language to express tension in garden imagery. The characteristic of otherness in this case is the subversion of the figure/ground relationship, shifting from representation to form, and the form or ground, in this case, shifting to figuration. The emotion of the expulsion, its shame and hope, are no longer seen within a human figure, but are now embedded in the garden ground. The otherness of gender is starting to transition into the ground in this test.

Desire as Otherness – longing to be wild

Figure 30: Penelope Burnett, *Pandani Grove after Snow*, 2015 - Oil on Masonite, 75 x 75 cm

Desire and latency evoke a feeling of longing for something other. Desire is a subjective proposition and has sexual undertones. In suggesting that the garden is both a site and a

metaphor, where the exotic and erotic can be unleashed (Riley, 1990), it is logical that garden imagery can also be evocative of desire. The work of Cecily Brown and Marc Quinn are exemplars of this. In Brown's work, desire it is portrayed in the sensuality of paint, its application and surface, whereas in Quinn's work the saturated colour and flamboyant composition operate as provocateurs of desire. However, the operation of these provocations is dependent on the imagination of the viewer.

Pandani Grove after the Snow, 2015 was a deliberate attempt to strip back and expose the structure of the garden that comes with the harshness of winter. The central pathway is blanketed in snow; however, the entry point, at the bottom edge of the work, is precarious with a mysterious opening that destabilises access. The flanking vegetation oscillates between a mix of Pandanis and tree trunks, through to nervous gestural marks. These gestural marks are complementary colours, green and red, which facilitate an optical tension that is heightened further with flashes of white. The overall effect was to destabilise the pictorial space and imply instability, risk and eroticism. The instability and risk is evoked through the fragility of the snowy path, and the eroticism through the delicately glazed slit-like opening in the path. The intention was to illicit a visceral emotive response before the viewer had time to position themselves.

The work is small in scale, 75 x 75 cm, so it is easy to quickly comprehend and get some bearings; the single-point perspective is emphasised by the path and exaggerated by the framing vegetation, which draws the eye into the intimate space. This compositional strategy was used to prompt a *power to* reading which is subtly challenged by the rupture in the path and the agency of the erratic gestural mark. Some have suggested that with continued focus there is a sensation of the ground moving, like being at sea – you almost fall into the pictorial space. This is a subjective observation, but nonetheless suggests a shift into a *power over* operation. The significance of this work is that it began a trajectory of testing the power play between the vista and the sensation of being in the garden.

4.2. Control

Control in Boundary

Figure 31: Penelope Burnett, *Ode to Jo (Waterlily House, Kew)*, 2016 - Oil on Masonite, 121 x 335 cm (three panels)

Imperial dominance and control is embedded in the conservatory images; the inside environment is controlled to bypass climatic restraints. *Ode to Jo (Waterlily House, Kew*), 2016 is one such image. The dominant feature in this painting is the angular rhythm of the light blue lines in the top third of the composition, which push downwards, creating a tension where the organic sap-green paint pour meets the edge. This painting is emblematic of a shift within my research. Reading the panels from left to right, you can see my own transition as a painter from illustrative figurative elements to more suggestive, non-descriptive marks. In the third panel, although contained by the fractured white beam, the agency of the paint pour, with its resistance and self-coagulation, transforms the surface into something other. The bookending of the structural beams hugged by illustrative vegetation strengthens the tension between containment and wildness. The waterlilies tip forward in the central panel, suggesting they want to escape the confines of the support, while the aim of the wave-like motion of the paint pour in the right panel is to suggest a slipping away into another plane, a place of elsewhere, somewhere unseen.

I see that the unpredictability of some of these passages of paint, juxtaposed with the deliberate controlling structural elements, makes this work curious yet at the same time self-conscious and awkward. The cartoony illustrative style almost borders on didactic in its demonstration of the garden as a bounded site. From this point, I resolved in my studio

practice to find other ways of depicting and exploring control without the obvious graphic rendering as seen here.

Control of the Edge

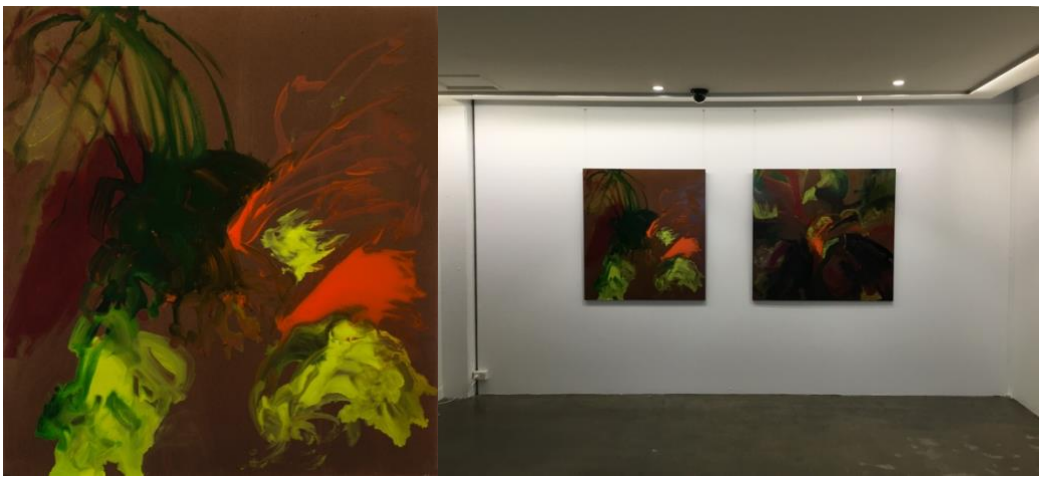

Figure 32: Penelope Burnett, *Scented*, 2017 (left) and test installation view - *Scented*, 2017 next to *The Quarry Pond 4 (Government House TAS)*, 2017

Controlling the edge and scale is an interesting and challenging paradox to work with. The perimeter of the painting is a necessity but it can also potentially be an active pictorial device. Arguably the edge is implicit when working with paintings; however, the heavy harshness of a Masonite edge amplifies the effect. Additionally, due to the contrasting low key base colour of a reflective brown, the works tend to sit off the wall rather than merge into the wall as a white canvas can.

For the support base, I have predominantly used square or slightly off-square dimensions in order to subvert the traditional landscape format.[25] In addition to the non-traditional support dimensions, I have tried to disrupt a predictable reading of the vistas by shifting the scale. I have found that this elicits a spatial tension in the viewer's response to the works, which occurs as a result of the unconventional association when positioned in relation to one another.

In the gallery installation test (Figure. 33), *Scented,* 2017 is positioned closely next to *The Quarry Pond 4 (Government House TAS),* 2017. The minimal space between the two works forces any reading of the works to include the relationship between the edges. The high key

[25] Landscape format is rectangular, with the horizontal view being the longest edge.

large splashes of yellow and orange of *Scented,* 2017 exert pressure on the confining edge: it feels like the support is too narrow for the work and the artwork wants to break out from its physical confines. This break out or continuation of the splash-like gesture appears as though it should extend across to the adjacent work. The disjuncture of the gestures following through is accentuated by the abruptness of the Masonite edge, causing a spatial tension in the relationship to *The Quarry Pond 4 (Government House TAS),* 2017, which suggests it is too close or that it should be hung on the opposite side. It is the conflict between this desire to break out and the control exerted by the edge that asserts a sense of disquiet. I found this assertion of the edge and its uneasiness a surprise, which led me to really consider the significance position and space in the final installation of my suite of works. The geometry, scale and distance between hung works proved to be intrinsic to the control of the edge.

Control of the Form

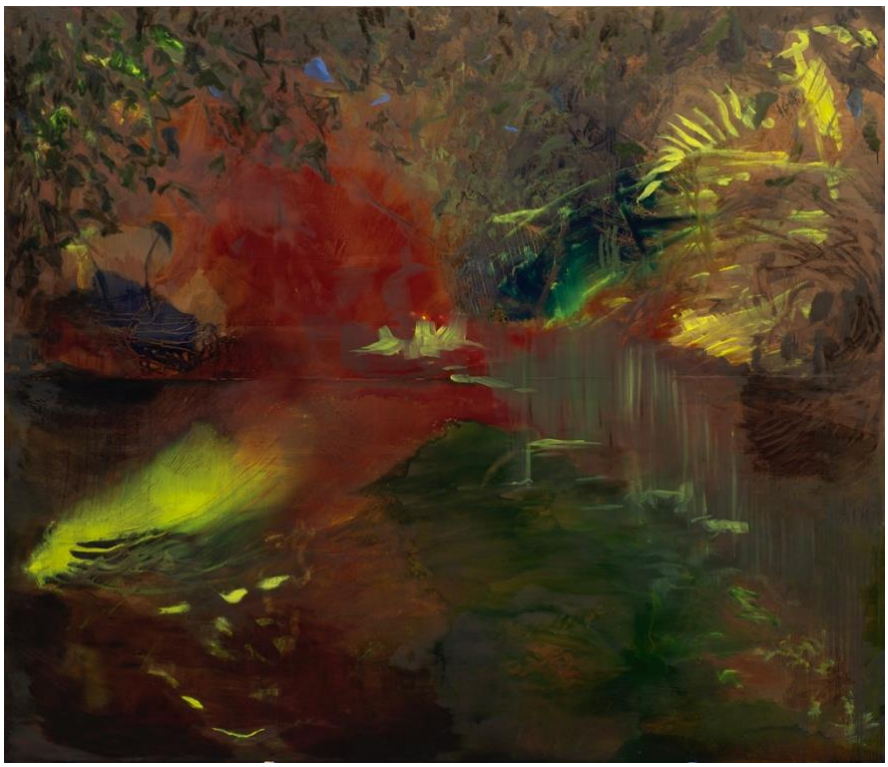

Figure 33: Penelope Burnett, *The Grotto Pool (Everglades, Leura),* 2017 - Oil on Masonite, 198 x 231 cm

Throughout this project I have tried to find an equilibrium of co-existence between control and wildness, knowing that a garden, as I have defined it, has elements of control and agency. I am also aware that as I have progressed though the project my natural aesthetic is drawn

towards the wilder elements of the garden. A serendipitous moment within the research was the discovery of manufactured 'wild spaces' in gardens. These are in the forms of grottoes, groves and water oases which are designed to have the illusion of secluded wild places. Two of the key sites I have visited as source material for this project are The Quarry Pond at Government House, Hobart, and The Grotto Pool at Everglades, Leura, in New South Wales.

The Grotto Pool (Everglades, Leura), 2017 has some distinct controlling features despite its overall fluid nature. Unless the viewer had actually been to the Everglades site, they would not know that the entire water feature is a designed recycling water course, where the surrounding walls and base have been manufactured in local stone and cement. The experience of the garden space is one of wonder and discovery of a hidden tranquil oasis. The painting *The Grotto Pool (Everglades, Leura),* 2017 aims to transport the viewer to a wild and natural waterhole. In the painting, the only obvious controlling feature is the horizon line, which immediately positions the viewer in reference to a real space. What is not obvious is that the original site was manufactured: it is very deliberately a garden that is controlled in its form.

The initial impact of the work is one of dominance; the unexpectedly large scale arrests attention. This dominance is exaggerated by the simple single-point perspective, inviting the viewer to enter deep into the pictorial space. It is an immersive, gentle image, and easily accessible.

The form, scale, perspective and even the paint application in *The Grotto Pool (Everglades, Leura),* 2017 have a considered control. Despite the impact of the scale of the work, the paint application and composition is minimal and simple. I see the power relationship as one of *power to*: compositionally it is easy to enter into the pictorial space and technically it is easy to discern how the image was formed; that is, which layers of paint were applied first. So, in Foucauldian terms the knowledge-power of the painter's process is readily accessible. The abstraction of the marks is figurative enough to be suggestive of vegetation and forms. The image operates like an oasis: it is calming, familiar and non-confrontational, while transient in its illusion of fluidity. This calming familiarity and access to the making process may provide the *power to* which Cooper has suggested the garden offers - the "conditions conducive to reverie" (2006, p. 84).

Control in the Materials – The rationale for using Masonite

Masonite has a resonance with the subject matter: it is a composite of the structural elements of wood and bark, the lignin, which has been subject to intense temperature extremes and compression. The appeal of Masonite is in the poetics of using the same structural building blocks of the garden, the trees, as a structural framework for paintings of gardens.

Masonite, with its smooth-ridged semi-gloss surface and the warm organic brown mid-tone, also provides an earthy humus-coloured base for the garden imagery. Masonite, unlike canvas, provides a hard, non-absorbent surface and when properly sealed facilitates a slipperiness and resistance to which the paint adheres. Masonite's rigidity is a controlling factor, for it limits the absorption capabilities of the paint. So unlike Behbahani's, *Report to London*, or Lowry's, *I act as the tongue of you,* where the paint appears stained and embedded in the canvas, on Masonite the paint sits on the surface. This characteristic of Masonite dictates how the paint can be applied; to overcome the resistant surface's predisposition for paint to appear flat and static,[26] viscosity rather than density becomes important in the application of paint.

Additionally, Masonite brings something unique to the reading of the image. Masonite has an overall darkness which tends to absorb light and dampen the life out of colours applied directly to it. This absorption facilitates a dank, cloistered atmosphere, as though you have stumbled upon some secluded mossy grotto. Consequently, when the works are hung together in a gallery, the overall atmosphere is one of a nutrient-rich damp soil, bringing an almost rotten earthiness and a dark humidity to the experience of viewing.

[26] Although I haven't mentioned Louise Hearman as one of my key contemporary practitioners, her ability to activate the surface of Masonite and render the illusion of depth has had a major influence on my own studio practice. Hearman' s use of chiaroscuro lighting, centrality of composition, and dexterity of painterly language from thin loose washes to textural marks all create vortexes into strange but familiar worlds which totally negate Masonite's predisposition to flatten the painted mark.

Figure 34: Penelope Burnett, *Pandani 3*, 2014 - Oil on Masonite, 240 x 120 cm

I also find the Masonite visceral because of the reflective nature of the surface, so when you add transparent and semi-transparent paint pours it appears like the surface has absorbed the pigment into its form. In *Pandani 3,* 2014, the dominance of the Masonite as both support and part of the image is reinforced by the scale (the commercial 240 x120 cm ratio), along with the glossy semi-transparent layers and pours. These paint pours emphasise the irregularities of the fibrous lignin. In this work, the surface is so shiny that the viewer's reflection could be seen on the surface, causing an interplay between the viewer and the figure ground; that is, between the real and imagined relationship of what is rendered and what is reflected.

Fanchon Focus, 2016 was another significant development in the studio research. In this piece, it became apparent that Masonite has the potential to become an active element within the artwork, above and outside the restraints and control of the structural support. The shifting between Masonite's predictable position of being the backdrop to the image, to an energetic optically oscillating space, was a very exciting development.

Figure 35: Penelope Burnett, *Fanchon Focus*, 2016 - Oil on Masonite, 120 x 120 cm

Masonite also reinforces another trope within the context of this project: as a form of 'other'. It is not the usual choice of support for oil painting, being neither canvas nor linen. As elaborated on earlier, Masonite's material characteristics bring a different agency to how the surface is prepared and the paint applied. Additionally, the scale and format of each of the Masonite supports carry an otherness to the work: Masonite works are usually small in scale (typically under 100 cm due to the weight, availability and handling difficulty).[27]

4.3. Agency

Agency in the Gesture

The origin of gesture is believed to predate speech and is strongly interwoven with the beginning of communication, both verbal and non-verbal. According to art historian Lia Marley, "Gesture within its multiple forms is the most primal and yet one of the most complex media for communicating ideas and emotions to others and the self" (2002). This primal complexity as a form of communication aligns itself well with the complexity of a garden containing the wildness of nature which is aptly demonstrated in the Cecily Brown work *Red Me No Green.* Intrinsic to the gestural marks in Brown's work is the density of the paint and

[27] In the recent 2016 MCA retrospective of Louise Hearman's painting practice of the last thirty years, curated by Anna Davis, not one of the works was over 100 cm.

its ability to hold the stipple of the brush mark. The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines gesture as "a movement of the hands, arms, or head, etc. to express an idea or feeling". I see gesture as the embodied way paint is applied to the surface of the painting; it encompasses method, energy and emotion. The agency of gesture is in its ability to communicate through its visceral physicality. This physicality not only declares its position, but also reveals where it has been. It encapsulates the time, the action and the intensity of the moment with the artist.

Agency through pouring paint

As a counterpoint to this agency of the artist in gestural marks, I have experimented with the agency of the paint, by increasing the fluidity to facilitate paint pours. This was a natural progression in the studio experimentation of agency. This new material form, produced by applying a solution of paint and medium, has its own agency, with the result that paint flowed, self-levelled and dissolved any traceable brush marks.

The agency implied in the paint pours can be interpreted both on a conceptual and metaphorical level. When considering the garden, there tends to be an assumption of taming something wild, forming a containment. Gardens, left untended, can become unruly or contaminated, overgrown with weeds. Gardens need tending, protecting, nurturing and, for the greatest impact, careful preparation and design. Consequently, underpinning the garden is this constant tension between contrivance of application and wildness. By deliberately using the veil or gauziness of the paint pours, I can emphasis the blurring of discernment when it comes to these definitions of authority and agency.

When working with paint pours, paint is mixed with a thin fast-drying medium (typically Medium No.1) and applied directly to prepared flat Masonite board. Variations arise from the different opacity and density of the pigment mix and with different levels of viscosity or oil content within the mediums. When the paint is pooling and spreading over the surface, I then work from the flat screen perspective, lifting different edges of the board so the paint flows freely across the surface. Gravity, and my managing of the tilt angle, controls the speed and direction of the paint. Within this process the paint pools and drips, sometimes paint runs off the edge of the board, leaving only a thin remnant; the consequence, a glass-like thin transparent layer. This process can be repeated both wet-on-wet or wet-on-dry, building up

the density of the pigment, and in some instances veiling prior pours. The following image is a studio shot of a paint pour in process. In this example, I have used both transparent and opaque pigment and two slightly different mixes of medium so I can layer the two colours and facilitate an organic fracturing effect where the two mediums and pigments collide.

Figure 36: Penelope Burnett, Research photograph 2016 - studio image, initial paint pours for *Hidden Garden; The Quarry, (Government House, TAS)*

Figure 37: Penelope Burnett, Research photograph, 2016 - *Government House Quarry Pond*, Hobart, TAS
Figure 38: Penelope Burnett, Research photograph, 2016 - paint pour stage one

Immediately after the pour, I used large brushes to define the border of the pond and suggest the structure of the trunk of a large tree which leads into the quarry pond. It takes several days for the pour to dry, so it must remain horizontal for the duration of the dying process. Care must also be taken to prevent dust and insects becoming trapped in the surface. It is in this period of waiting that the agency of the paint begins to assert its control over the work. Within the drying process there can be a formation of minute veins and the leeching of the pigment. These unexpected wild organic passages of pigment are evocative of unmediated geological fistulas - a surprising development where the surface shifts from a pictorial reading

to a visceral earthy experience. At the time, I didn't realise the significance of this development and proceeded to force a representational reading.

Figure 39: Penelope Burnett, Research photograph, 2016 - detail of initial paint pour

The battle between control of vista and agency of materiality within this work began as soon as I applied the first gesture after the paint pour. The following images reveal some of the struggle of trying to find the threshold, where both codes could resonate in the same image, both yielding and dominating simultaneously.

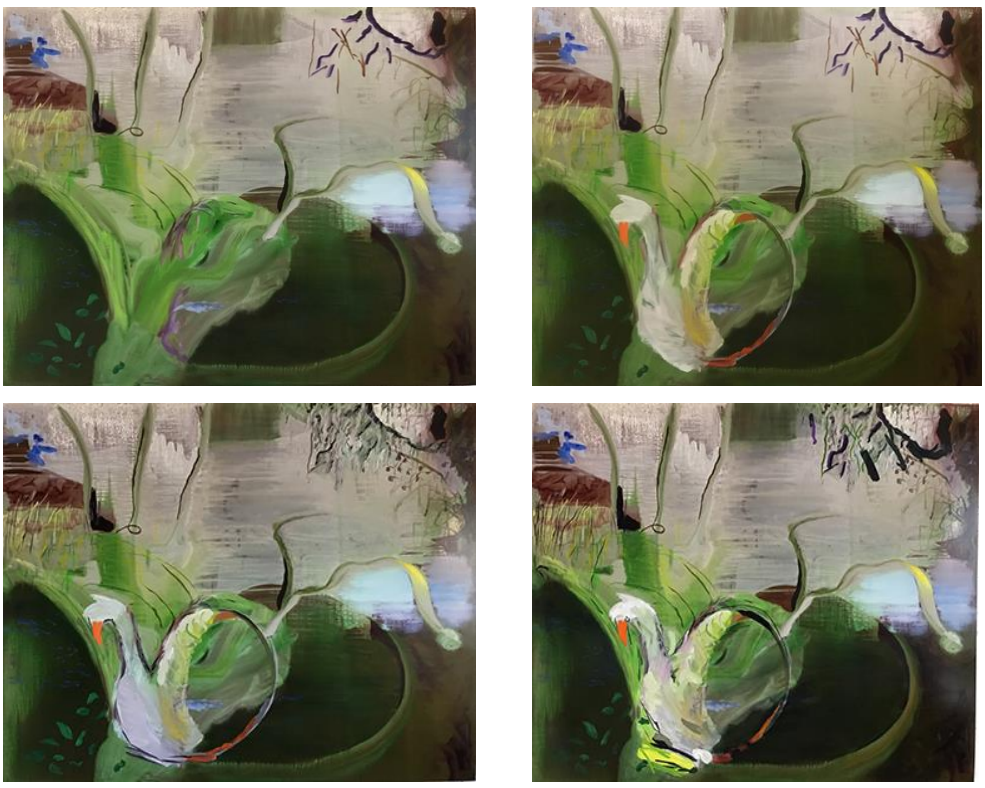

Figure 40: Penelope Burnett, Research photograph, 2016 - showing different stages of development.

This work has yet to resolve itself. If anything, it has raised more questions than answers. Unfortunately, the work is leaning towards the decorative and illustrative rather than the

evocative tension between agency and authority. The seductive fluidity and elemental resonance of the paint pour has been subjugated by the over-embellishing of the vegetation and clunky cartoonlike swan, bringing a discord to the overall image. The illustrative marks sit on the surface whilst the paint pour tastefully recedes into pictorial depth. Although there are some fluid passages of paint, the painting is overworked, with the agency of the paint sabotaged by the control of the painter. Consequently, I consider this test to be an informative failure.

Figure 41: Penelope Burnett, *Hidden Garden; The Quarry (Government House TAS)*, 2016 - Oil on Masonite, 120 x 150 cm

Agency in the Fluidity

The Grotto (Everglades, Leura), 2016 is a combination of two paint pours converging. The agency in the fluidity of these two paint pours made it difficult to manipulate it into any form or shape - the pours simply flow to the lowest point on the surface. Although I had a specific site in mind, I was interested in the idea of a depthless space experienced when looking into the reflective surface of freshwater ponds, like the way reflections make it difficult to discern what is real and what is a reflection.

Central to the process is the fluidity of the surface and the fluidity of my control as the maker. I am constantly reassessing the forms and their presence within the whole composition. The whole process takes several hours. What I find exciting and frustrating within the process is

that the paint continues to move, even when I stop working. It shifts and settles with the force of gravity and its fluidity slows with the drying process. During the process, I have learnt to step away for periods of time, allowing for this gradual movement and space between my response and the new forms. Sometimes I add more of the paint pour to deepen the intensity of the pigment, and at other times, when the surface is overly saturated with medium, I soak or sponge it off. The stamp-like marks in the right central section show where I used a soft cloth to lift some of the pour off as it was getting slightly tacky. While the surface is in this constant state of flux, I can add and remove elements, drawing them closer to the surface or pushing them further back. Some of the yellow I pushed forward in the four corners of the composition to emphasise the sensation of entering into a deep central space. The bulk of this work was done in one long session, and then after several weeks to allow the work to dry I added some of the twisting blue falling marks in the top left.

Figure 42: Penelope Burnett, *The Grotto (Everglades, Leura)*, 2016 - Oil on Masonite, 122 x 130 cm

By analysing this process, I hope to convey the transient unfolding that happens with the dance between the paint and the painter. I don't feel like I have control. I feel like I have an understanding but I am constantly yielding to what develops on the surface. The biggest challenge for me is when to stop and allow the paint to have its own agency.

4.4. Oscillations

Oscillations in Colour

Looking Back, 2015 has a very limited palette of high key red and blue. The hues are evenly proportioned and balanced in their coverage, but also have a profound disquiet operating in their relationship to each other.

Figure 43: Penelope Burnett, *Looking Back,* 2015 - Oil on Masonite, 80 x 80 cm

The warmth of the red and the coolness of the blue appear at times to flip into cool red and warm blue. This temperature instability, juxtaposed with the equal balance between the two hues, provokes a spatial disorientation. The aim was to enable the viewer to focus on the bottom left blue corner of the composition and lead the eye into a low deep space. The central red abstracted pathway occupies a curious unrelated frontal position. Then, as the eye lifts through the red passage, it recedes into a deeper space. In some respects, the colour sections of this image are operating like the self-contained zones in Jan Brueghel the Elder's *Garden of Eden*; however, in this case the eye is not searching to make narrative connections, but trying to orientate.

This orientation is further frustrated by a visual vibration which is generated by the afterimage projected from viewing the saturated colour. The dynamic of hue and mark interacting

together with the Masonite has materialised in this project to be a key dynamic for suggesting thresholds into other.

Oscillations in Figure/Ground relationship

Figure 44: Penelope Burnett, *Spring (Everglades, Leura)*, 2017 - Oil on Masonite, 121 x 112 cm

As in the last example, *Looking Back, Spring (Everglades Leura),* 2017 has a visual vibration operating between the contrasting hues. The dominate feature of this work is the large red form. The oscillation in this image is predominantly in the figure ground relationship. It was my intention that at first glance the red form is perceived as a pathway leading into a densely planted garden, but as the viewer allows the marks to transform from representation into abstract paint, the red form pushes forward out of the pictorial space, emotively projecting itself towards the viewer and arresting their attention from the illusionistic space. The path becomes the figure asserting its own presence. This spatial oscillation forces me to double-take my original reading of the image, offering either an abstracted anthropomorphic figure or a receding garden path.

Oscillations between Abstraction and Figuration

Figure 45: Penelope Burnett, *The Quarry Pond 1 (Government House TAS)*, 2016 - Oil on Masonite, 90 x 100cm

The Quarry Pond 1, 2016 is the rawest and my most honest example of searching for a co-existing space between figuration and abstraction. Without analysing the process or agency of the gesture, I believe this work shows the vulnerability and struggle of navigating this shifting space; the marks appear self-conscious, whereas others slip into a deep resonating presence. Emphasising the key point, this work oscillates between abstraction and figuration. Unlike the previous example, *Spring (Everglades Leura)*, 2017, this work slips to and fro, from being a colourful conglomeration of abstract marks to a distorted fragmentation of deep organic shadowy space. Some marks are suggestive of twisting branches and glistening light; however, none of the forms are anchored, accentuating the transient floating atmosphere of the image. Overall the work has a strong resonance with nature, but it refuses to be identified as a specific place. Rather, it projects passages of light and movement between painterly colour and form.

Oscillations between Real and Imagined

Figure 46: Penelope Burnett, *The Quarry Pond 3 (Government House TAS)*, 2017 - Oil on Masonite, 90 x 100cm

I see *The Quarry Pond 3,* 2017 as refining progression from the complex oscillations between figuration and abstraction in *The Quarry Pond 1*, 2016 example and another turning point in my studio practice: I was trying too hard as the painter and not allowing the paint room to express and expand on the characteristics of control and agency. My works to date were loaded and visually demanding; they all were driven with a specific agenda and it occurred to me that perhaps I was trying to convey too much in each work – I was operating with too much control. *The Quarry Pond 3,* 2017 was an exercise in restraint on my part, introducing only the bare minimum of figurative elements (this, in itself, was a process of addition and then elimination) and then allowing the agency of the paint, primarily through thin paint pours, to unify and somehow mystify the figurative elements. I consciously set aside the source imagery and allowed the imagined spaces to form in the actual painting. This abandonment of real space opened portals of opportunity for a subversion of spatial and focal relationships to develop. With this freedom of not needing to make sense pictorially, I found the spaces became more evocative. As I allowed the paint pours to dictate the mood and nuances of the work, the uncertainty and openness of the process heightened the oscillations between real and imagined.

Oscillations between Macro to Micro perspectives

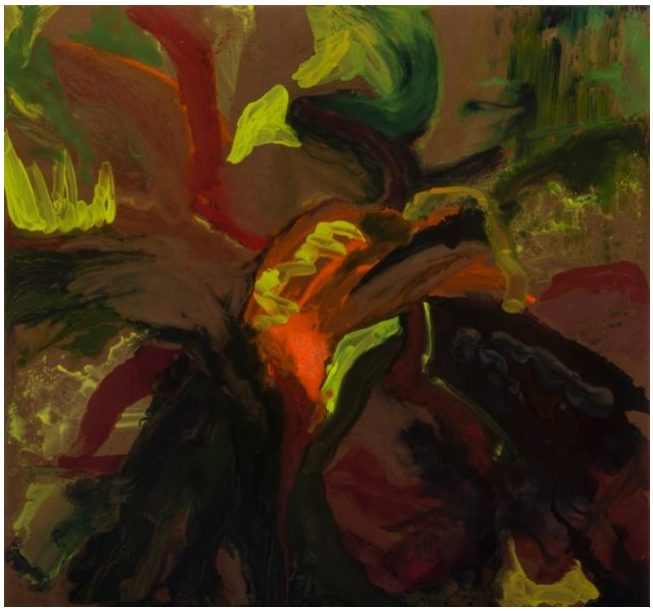

Figure 47: Penelope Burnett, *The Quarry Pond 4 (Government House TAS)*, 2017 - Oil on Masonite, 121 x 130 cm

In the work *The Quarry Pond 4,* 2017, I striped away all locatable information, allowing for a layering of the viewpoints; each mark responds to the spatial shifts as they emerged relationally to each other, rather than overloading the image with multiple viewpoints stitched together. The outcome was an image that oscillates between the macro and micro focal distance simultaneously. This of course is a subjective reading of the space and is totally dependent on the viewer's engagement. Unexpectedly, stripping the image of key orientational devices, such as the horizon or sky, and limiting the tonal range to high key earthy/synthetic hues, generates an exaggeration of the energy and interaction between the mark and the Masonite. The outcome - an oscillation between the Masonite as a support and the Masonite as an active space; a gestural mark in and of itself.

The irony is that, by editing out the visual complexity and density of mark making in the construction of the garden image and the authority of the artist over the agency of the paint, the authority and agency relationship has shifted to the viewer. The theatrics of movement has shifted to the orientation of the viewer in the space of in-between: the in-between space of the work and the viewer, the in-between space of real and imagined, here is where we have a shifting from the macro to micro, and a perpetual state of in-betweeness.

Conclusion – Chapter 4

In this chapter I have isolated and dissected the mechanics of otherness, control, agency and oscillations, to interrogate the operation of these tropes through the language of paint and compositional structures. This has been a reflective process, and as I have contemplated my studio practice in order to test these tropes, a refining and clarity to the project has ensued.

Each new work built on lessons learnt in the former. The activation of colour, light, surface and the desire to be evocative of something other became key. The tension suggested by juxtaposing controlling devises like boundaries, edges, structural forms and the material of Masonite was also significant. I discovered that Masonite can sit curiously between control and agency, at the threshold of acting as a support and activating as part of the composition. Additionally, the agency of the painter and the paint can be understood though the gesture, paint pour and fluidity of the materials. Underpinning all these operations is the transient operation I identify as oscillations. This fluctuation is demonstrated between the figure/ground relationship, abstraction and figuration, optical vibrations of saturated complementary colours, the merging of real and imaginary and the perspective shift between macro and micro. Within the studio research I have explicated how each of these operations has occurred and why they have occurred.

In the following and final chapter I will determine what this research has told me. Ultimately, I have been looking at garden imagery from an experiential point of view, from a cultural, political and gendered outlook. I have elicited key tropes from all of these perspectives. I have focused on the ones that intersect and overlap continuously, isolating them to become the framework for my methodology for pursuing studio practice. Through the distillation of these tropes I have created a new way of seeing garden imagery. How this operates and what this is, is expanded upon in the following chapter, the conclusion. In this chapter I also discuss the final installation of the works and the experience of them.

Chapter 5. Findings and Conclusions

Introduction

Central to this painterly investigation of garden imagery has been the understanding of our relationship to such imagery. Throughout this paper I have discussed a range of different formats and structures to give a historical and a contemporary view of key issues that we assume, see and experience within garden imagery. I have identified the key characteristics of garden imagery as authority (control) and agency (wildness). From this position, I then expanded on the operation of these characteristics conceptually, historically and through the language of paint. Key to the project was to consider how the tension between these seemingly opposing tropes reflects the complexity of society's relationship with space and nature. The project focused on this tension and on how issues such as control and authority are used in garden imagery.

I began this discussion by defining the garden with the key terms of otherness, care and wildness. In support of these definitions, I expanded on the story of the Garden of Eden which has had significant influence, both on garden imagery and Western thinking.

Otherness became the central premise of this studio-based investigation and the project's focus. In its most simplistic form, otherness is emblematic of that which sits outside the norm. I discussed the concept of the threshold of otherness, which was supported by the ideas of Emma Cocker, Marc Treib and David Batchelor. For Cocker, otherness sits at the threshold of the untameable and unexpected. Treib identifies otherness as the delicate agreement between seemingly conflicting landscape modes, while for Batchelor otherness is embedded in the cultural bias and the potency of colour. In parallel to my contextual research, and central to my studio practice, I questioned how paint in garden imagery can use the traits of otherness to present a new way of being that is both experiential and embedded.

Underlying this trajectory of otherness is a power play, which is identified as an equivocation between control and wildness. In defining wildness and control, I present the idea of wildness as an unattainable, mythological freedom, and the motivation of care, which I expand upon as a Foucauldian power structure. This has been evidenced through the examination of four

historical examples, and from these examples I identify structural and formal relationships that affect the way we perceive garden imagery. Additionally, I introduced the Foucauldian relational convention of power as a theoretical framework to discuss these power operations within pictorial and the physical space – the space between the viewer and the image.

In Chapter 1, I examined two different ways of viewing garden imagery through analysis of the wall paintings of the Villa of Livia, *The Garden Room,* and Jan Brueghel the Elder's *Garden of Eden*. The first is based on the garden structures of the period, so it is perceived as real and therefore functions as an experience. The second is an imaginary space, and operates as a vista; a scene to be examined or viewed rather than experienced.

In Chapter 2, I established the intrinsic relationship between the experience of gardens and how we experience garden imagery by examining Kew Gardens and Monet's Giverny Gardens and corresponding imagery. Both gardens and imagery have two distinct structures. Kew, with its Imperial structure and vista, is an example of the theoretical framework of control. This framework was analysed through Craig Owens, who sees representation as a form of power. The political, cultural and representational power of control is contextualised through the writings of W.T.J. Mitchell, Martin Jay and Martin Warnke. The key point of the Kew exemplars was to demonstrate how control was projected through surveying the position of the vista. This position of taking in the vista is a very familiar part of Western understanding of gardens and garden imagery, and is loaded with political, cultural and gendered bias.

As a counterpoint, the second exemplar, Monet's Garden in Giverny and *The Water Lilies* (1914-1926) at Le Musée de l'Orangerie, demonstrated an evocative and experiential approach. This garden and artwork offers an embedded experience, where the view sits outside the framework of vistas and perimeters. What is important about Monet's Garden is the play and movement of light on the garden's surfaces: this characteristic is central to how Monet structures imagery. I argue that this play of movement is evocative of wildness. I have defined wildness in garden constructs as the ever-resourceful life force of nature which, transposed to paint, aligns with the movement of its alchemy - the viscosity, energy of the gesture, and fluidity.

I have contextualised wildness by discussing the writings of Emma Marris, Rebecca Solnit and Richard Mabey. All three writers argue wildness as critical to survival and a source of tension as it hovers on the threshold of our perception of cultivation. Wildness in Monet's imagery is restricted to the surface - it is cosmetic - and is limited by the ocular effect of its shallow depth, resulting in the painting being perceived as a colour field rather than a vista. Monet's *Water Lilies* provides the evidence supporting my argument that the movement of the surface and the viewer transports the moment into one of experience rather than vista.

Up until this point the threshold of otherness, control (and care) and wildness have been discussed in generalised terms. In Chapter 3, I expanded on the gendered nature of the garden by contrasting Berthe Morisot's *Lilacs at Maurecourt* (1874) and Édouard Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1862-1863). Again, two different structures resonated: the embedded experience resonating with the spectatorial vista. From these examples and discussion, I argued this as a gender bias and gendered relationship.

In refining the argument, I then contextualised the field and established that the historical structures and recurring themes of otherness, control (and care) and wildness are still current in contemporary garden imagery. Within that discussion I expanded on how the relationship of nature and culture is informed within contemporary garden imagery. I made direct correlations through the formal structures in my own painting. I took up the ideas of otherness control, agency and oscillation to analyse these tropes through a range of contemporary art works, isolating them individually and defining them through describing contemporary works of Marc Quinn - *Hyper Nova* (2010), Fiona Lowry - *I act as the tongue of you* (2008), Cecily Brown – *Red Me No Green* (2008), and Bahar Behbahani – *Report to London* (2015-16). These works not only clarified the discussion in terms of how garden images are political, representational, gendered, and cultured, but also how this exchange operates through the application of paint.

These tropes became the foundation of my studio research and methodology. In order to interrogate the slipping points, I subdivided their operations still further into formal structures such as colour, edge, and gesture. Within this studio research, I have found that none of these tropes works in isolation and that a crossover and cohabitation happens within each image. This crossover reinforces the idea of threshold which is intrinsic to the whole project: one

cannot operate without the other, where the oscillation is never fixed but remains fluid, transient and temporal.

New way of seeing

The project's aim has been to find in garden imagery a new way of seeing that is embedded, experiential and implicit in being both of the gardener and the maker – the agency of the garden and the paint. In the course of this research, I completed over seventy paintings.[28] My final thesis comprises a small selection of these, chosen to demonstrate a non-perspectival compositional approach to garden imagery. Rather than presenting or representing a vista to be surveyed or looked at, the final body of work offers an embedded, experiential vantage point and invites a visceral experience from the viewer. The selected works lack the fixity of perspective; with multiple ways to interpret their operation, they are open ended.

Close formal analysis of historical and contemporary examples of garden imagery informed my studio experimentation, and I have identified and stripped back many familiar visual tropes. I paid special attention to the materiality of the paint and the activation of the Masonite support. My objective was to mesh selective sensory triggers to construct images that offered a discrete, subjective connective tropism: sensory, familiar and felt. In line with Bachelard, Dixon Hunt and Cooper, for whom the garden is conducive to moments of reverie, a slippage between the exterior to the interior, these works are deliberately silent: the viewer is alone with their own inner thoughts. Consequently, the paintings are structured to evoke private and intimate moments in a garden, rather than grand vistas, to emphasise their reflective and experiential nature.

In this concluding chapter, I present what I have discovered through experimenting with the installation; seeing the operation of the selected studio works in relationship to each other. I also affirm my findings through this research and reflect on possible directions post completion. Finally, and most importantly, I state my contribution to new knowledge and the field of visual practice within painted garden imagery.

[28] see Appendix 2 for a glossary of key artworks.

The Installation

It was only after the opportunity to test the proposed final body of work in a gallery space, where the paintings could be seen in relationship to each other, that I could begin to see the full bearing of the research. Prior to this experience, my analysis had been of individual works or views. A garden is an environment which you move through, so to view the artworks in a collective setting had a profound effect on my research conclusions.

In designing the gallery configuration and hanging relationships between the works, I have been aware of the sequence and position of the viewer's motion though the collective artworks. Traditionally, pathways have been a means of moving from A to B within the garden context; they are linkages to something or somewhere else. In formal gardens, they tend to be well structured and direct. I have found, however, that some of the most unexpected discoveries in gardens are likely to occur during the journey, not necessarily at the destination's planned vista. John Dixon Hunt discusses the lack of literary discourse about the ordinary transitional spaces in garden design, which he has labelled the spaces of between. Dixon Hunt describes it as:

> Our movement though a site is also a movement in our mind. Sometimes we watch carefully where to put our feet (stepping-stones in a pond), but at others our feet find their own way while our eyes and minds are elsewhere. We ignore at our peril this varied and scattered attention … While we explore, we are confronted not just with paths but with walls or hedges that shape our responses to sites, partly by refusing any deliberate view of other items (Dixon Hunt, 2016b, p. 26 & 28).

I see this whole thesis of works as a discovery of moments along a pathway, rather than the declaration of an arresting vista. Within the formal structures of some of the works, namely *Looking Back,* 2015*, Spring (Everglades, Leura),* 2017, and *Clos Normand (Giverny France),* 2014, the pathway is quite evident. Yet, in other works like *Pioneers Memorial Garden (Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney),* 2017, and *The Quarry Pond 3 (Government House TAS),* 2017, it is merely a suggestion. I propose that a space of otherness - what Dixon Hunt calls the spaces of between - can be found in this simplicity of being open to distraction and wonderment, of wildness within the bounded confines of a garden. Otherness is experienced through the imagination and, as I identified in the last chapter, this becomes fluid when you introduce aspects of otherness in colour, light, surface, and figure/ground relationships.

I have found an additional threshold where the connection between the real and imagined varies due to the resonance between adjacent artworks. This was a conscious choice: where I have chosen to strip back the illustrative constructs and motifs, I have allowed the elemental garden facets, such as the earthiness, dampness, soil, dankness, humus, ochres and oxides, to emerge in the artworks in order to facilitate a visceral experience.

The exhibition layout and artwork placement have been designed to replicate the unfolding nature of the path. In doing this, I have restrained the expansive vistas and vantage points, which in turn favours an intimate reading. To negate rushing though the space, I have deliberately set up clusters of work that have particular relationships, triangulations and overlays of gathering points. One such station is an intimate garden room which forces a pause. The aim of the tempo of this section shifts dramatically; it is meant to be unexpected. The three works in this space*, Scented,* 2017, *The Quarry Pond 4 (Government House TAS),* 2017, and *"The wild gatecrashers" after Mabey,* 2017, operate in a different way from the rest of the installation. The application of paint is direct and bold. The marks are easily discernible. Additionally, something strange is happening. The works declare their own spatial distance. The intention of this visual engagement was to create both an intimacy and a distance, like a strange *Alice in Wonderland* experience:[29] the viewer shrinks, whilst their gaze gets bigger, and somehow the viewer is positioned closer to the soil. The directness of this abstraction aims to carry mystery. The otherness in this room is in the viewer's negotiation between the agency of the paint with the oscillation of their own position.

[29] *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is a fantasy novel written in 1865 by Lewis Carroll (pseudonym for Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) about a young girl's adventures when she chases after a white rabbit in a waistcoat. Within the story through various magic potions Alice's scale transforms to be very small to huge.

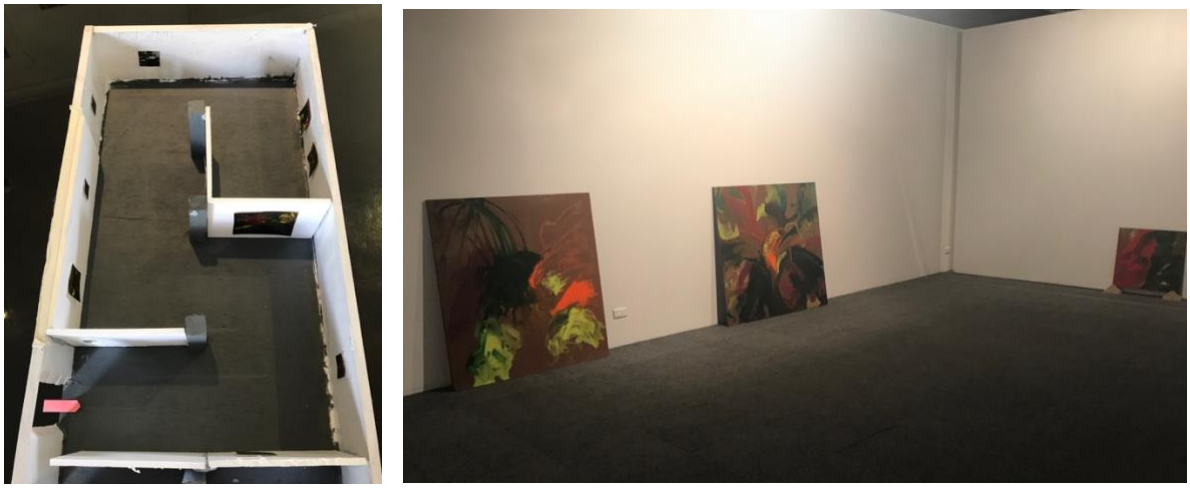

Figure 48: Penelope Burnett, Research photograph, 2017 of proposed installation view

Connections are made through lighting, scale and colour. For example, as you enter the gallery space, the viewer is immediately drawn to the small dramatically spot-lit red and blue *Looking Back,* 2015,[30] painting. From a distance, it reads as abstract but as the viewer steps forward the pictorial figuration is revealed. From this close proximity, the viewer turns left to be immediately dwarfed by the scale, surface and depth of *The Grotto Pool (Everglades, Leura),* 2017.[31] The few accents of blue in the overhanging foliage of this work are exaggerated by the peripheral resonance of blue from *Looking Back,* 2015. This resonance of colour and cross-pollination between works in the visual periphery is a deliberate installation strategy. The yellow and warm, orangey reds also activate and strengthen the value of the similar hues. This strategy is not designed to repeat motifs, but to instil a familiarity to the work and, as such, provide visual links to compensate for the stripping back of familiar garden motifs. These triads of visual connections and overlays aim to facilitate an imaginative and playful engagement, encouraging a pause and slowing down in order to synthesise the viewing experience.

Another interesting development in seeing the works' spatial relationship to each other is the agency of the viewer in navigating the shifting perspectives; that is, the internal positioning of the viewer to align themselves with the paintings. For the installation, the horizontal base line used as a point of departure was set by the largest work *The Grotto Pool (Everglades, Leura),* 2017. From this baseline, moving through the exhibition, the pictorial vista dissolves. Some

[30] See Figure 43

[31] See Figure 33

works push downwards, some push up. What tends to happen, after the initial engagement with each image and its surface, is a subtler oscillation of the pictorial axis, a criss-crossing dynamic.

Figure 49: Penelope Burnett, Diagram of axis dynamic

This axial criss-crossing dynamic, combined with the methodologies of agency, control, oscillations and otherness, forces the viewer to orientate and re-orientate themselves in relation to each painting.

In hindsight, I can see that the singularity of focus on this research project made me so driven in my studio practice that each painting was loaded with the pressure of informing the next painting. I had forgotten to enjoy the journey, to adjust my pace with the seasons of the garden, the times of barrenness and rest; the dormant in-between moments when the soil is bare and the plants are awkward in their post-pruned nakedness.

With this in mind in the final months of my preparation for examination, I endeavoured to create some small pauses within this visual dialogue; companion works to punctuate and create moments of reverie - what Dixon Hunt describes as the unexpected spaces of between (2016b) and Bachelard refers to as the motionless moment where there is a slippage into "the

space of elsewhere" (1994, p. 184). I find something intensely satisfying in the soil's latent exposure and uncomplicated emptiness. It is this element of the garden that I had neglected in my imagery, the moments of re-grouping, rest - the pauses from visual demands. So, the final studio works were a deliberate stripping back and visual simplification, where restraint and erasure became loaded; latent with the visual tension at the threshold of paint and activated bare Masonite. These final works bypass the dynamic pictorial axis and all the other deliberate demands of otherness, control, agency and oscillations to simply and unselfconsciously be silent invitations into Eden's earthiness.

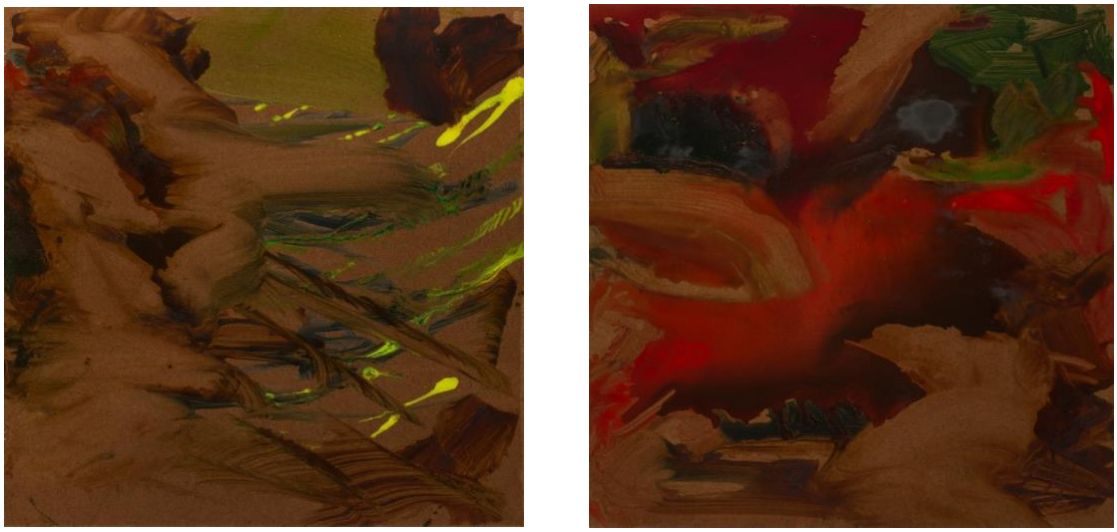

Figure 50: Penelope Burnett, *Resonate*, 2017 and *Garden of Reverie*, 2017

The Findings

Atmospherically, the works together create a mood that is brooding, and evoke the dank earthiness of winter. The thinness of the paint's application and exposure of the Masonite brings an elemental resonance to the imagery that is raw and basic. The progression of image making involved simplification and reduction: the last works are stripped back to the essentials, and are elemental, referring to earth, wind, water and fire. The materiality and chemical elements of the medium, in particular the pigment of the paint, are exposed in order to resonate with the minerals of the earth: ochre, copper, oxides and cadmium are not just colours, but also elementary materials. This linkage is visceral rather than cognitive. Thus, despite the deliberate elimination of the narrative elements that appeared in earlier suites of painting, (like garden borders and pot holders), the final works still offer familiarity, via the materiality and application of the paint but not through motif. The particular consistencies of

the paint invite a visceral sense of engagement through viscosity. That is, the manner in which the substance has congealed in some passages suggests a suspension of time and weathered endurance. Conversely, in other passages where there are quick gestural marks, the paint is slippery, moist, and pulsating. This instinctual lexicon of painterly gesture aims not only to register with our eyes, but also to provoke an evocation of our own garden experience.

Over the course of the research, my palette has shifted with the lessons and experiences I have gained. The dominant hues of the palette that comprise the thesis have a strong resonance with winter: the colours are saturated, earthy, deep and sombre. I associate the palette with the harshness, exposure and bareness of darker, colder months of the year.

The shortened daylight hours and the angle of the sun produce metabolic changes, such as the reduction of photosynthesis. In the case of deciduous trees, the leaves change from green to autumn oranges, red and yellows and then finally dropping off the tree. This is caused by transference of the nutrients from the leaves to the branches and ultimately the bark, in a conservation of nutrients and energy. All growth is suspended and the plant appears dormant. Unseen, important internal processes occur: proteins are reconstituted, cell membranes reinforced and hormone generation for replenishment and future growth. Winter is the season of restoration, yet while winter stillness signals dormancy, hidden to the unsuspecting or casual gaze are vital processes of renewal. The cusp of late winter and early spring is a transformative and active time within the garden. Before the obvious signs of spring, the attuned gardener observes tiny signs in atmospheric shifts that permit the anticipation of fecundity and regeneration. I argue it is the potentiality and fecundity of regeneration that can be aligned to gender associations, rather than the binary association of male or female.

Winter is not a showy time, there are few colourful sprays of flowers. The garden's activity is deep and embedded in the structure of the plants, operating completely independent and hidden from the gardener. What intrigues me is the illusion of the hostile and almost dead appearance of the dormant garden, yet veiled beneath the surface is an ongoing frenzy of vital regenerative processes. The colour and temper of my artworks depict endurance and embedded knowledge, and the mood of the artworks is not stagnation, but promise: the sensation is one of being on the cusp - the threshold moment.

The visceral and tactile nature of the artworks make them hard to read. Some have said that the experience of viewing is like having your gum boots on, you're cold and muddy. The vista and position is one of no fixed vantage point, yet there are points of navigation. These points of navigation are the snippets of soft structures or peripheral flashes of winter light. Unlike Kew Gardens, my collective artworks are not set up for expansive vistas, where the viewer has a high vantage point that takes in the expanse, adopting the dominating position of distancing the garden and surveying the domain. Instead, in my artworks there is a tightening and editing out of the periphery, a stripping away of motifs, boundaries and visual locators, leaving the viewer looking at what has been overlooked: we are invited into the space, or at least we come within its reach.

From the outset of this project I made the observation that garden imagery can be gendered, as well as carry cultural and political undertones. Starting with Masaccio's *Expulsion form the Garden* where the tension in the power relationship of authority and agency is dramatically illustrated. This image is not gender neutral: Eve is symbolic of fecundity, fertility, emotion and desire. The tension I have observed in the historical and contemporary garden paintings has been in the depiction of gender in the garden. Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* has an elitist view, the garden is simply a backdrop, it is there to be observed, the female figures are part of this visual pleasure, both as an object and a symbolic embodiment of wildness to be conquered. In the Morisot work, *Lilacs at Maurecourt*, the figures are part of nature: they are at one with it, part of the cycle of life, part of nature. With its psychedelic declaration of otherness, Quinn's work *Hyper Nova* brings a spectacular sexualisation of the garden; it is confrontational and non-negotiable. Conversely, Lowry's *I act as the tongue of you* is subversive in its screening, through the acute control and malevolence which oscillates into decorative femininity. Although pictorially it operates as a vista, this reading is subservient to the palette and visceral reading of the work. Brown's *Red Me No Green* is explicitly sexual in its materiality. Narrative controls and pictorial tropes are eradicated and the work is experienced rather then read. Likewise, the deeply intimate work of Behbahani, *Report to London,* which I read through the lens of mourning, tries to make sense and give voice to repression and control. It is framed and bound in a blood-like veil. Here, the frustration of viewing is instinctual and embedded in code.

The works present an alternative vision to the formerly dominant binary of a grand heroic landscape coded as masculine, and a decorative domestic genre coded as feminine. My contribution to the canon of garden imagery is the recoding of gender tropes. Gender is implicit in the garden's earthiness: it's dirty, it's difficult, it's wild and it resists control. Gender holds a potency, and a potentiality. I hesitate to say it is about fertility; it is in some sense but it is also far more than that. The fertility, Mother Earth association is too clichéd and easy; this relationship is complex and fluid. Gender is not just seen in depictions of pretty, delicate flowers, but it can be weighted and enduring, and gritty. Gender oscillates in form and operation, similar to how these paintings operate, through the push and pull, and resistance to be solid and still. The wildness, the otherness, the conflicted nature of the works somehow appears as a celebration, while at the same time questioning that celebration, reinforcing an agency in the imagery.

Though I have created works that strip back the garden to an elemental visceral perspective, the mythology Eden remains firmly entwined in these works. However, this Eden is not binary and rigid in its perspective; it is a space that makes connections with what is planted beside it. It understands the collective cultural and political binary associations embedded in its history, knowing it is part of its DNA and it is indomitable. Yet, at the same time, Eden invites a new way of seeing, where gender is redefined in the garden to be deeply aligned with the threshold of potentiality, potency and regenerative nature of the soil.

Final Reflections

Not only have I suggested a new way of seeing Eden in this project, I have also questioned the way Eve is perceived. One of the first texts I read in preparation of this project was Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* (1982). Interestingly, my first reaction to this text was visceral and difficult (a similar reaction I intended for viewers to have to my work) - a deeply personal reaction to the aggressively graphic content before any subjective analysis of the narrative could ensue. In hindsight, I can appreciate Carter's demythologising of Carl Jung's theories of the archetypal feminine by subverting, adapting and challenging these semi-religious notions of sexuality in order to question the socio-political construct of femininity (Perez-Gil, 2007).

In the early stages of my candidature, I couldn't reconcile the agency of the imagery and language, with the complex deconstruction, exploration, exposure and exaggeration of Carter's considered tropes of identity and gender. But now, I see my Eve has done exactly the same thing by testing, exposing, exaggerating and eradicating the power constructs within painted garden imagery. Through this research, I can navigate through various gendered arguments by being able to recognise the threshold between *power over* and *power to*.

In asking where the research might go next and if I have identified a gap that the scope of this project has not covered, two areas come to mind. Firstly, I would like to push the key finding of this research of seeing garden imagery as an embedded visceral experience through the installation of the paintings. This challenges a conventional approach and experience of painted garden imagery.

Figure 51 Peter Cripps *Another History for H.B. and R.L.*, 1991 - Masonite panels on wooden frames, mirror finish panels, steel legs, dimensions variable installation images from *Taking It All Away*: MCA Collection, 18 Dec 2014 to 15 Feb 2015.

In 2015, I saw the work of Peter Cripps, *Another History for H.B. and R.L.* (1991)[32], which gave me the kernel of an idea to expand the boundaries of the Masonite substrate within the installation. I would like to experiment with lining the whole gallery space with Masonite - the walls, floor and perhaps even the ceiling - and through lighting and pre-planned Masonite panel positioning extend the painted garden experience into a contemporary painted garden

[32]Peter Cripps' *Another History for H.B. and R.L.* references Austrian artist Herbert Bayer (H.B.) and the Australian scholar Robert Lingard (R.L.).

room. This clearly references the historical garden rooms and the salon gallery hang already expanded upon in this paper.

Secondly, I see scope to develop the trope of otherness within painted garden imagery to become something that literally engages with the unpredictability of nature. Contemporary practice is currently engaging with some exciting propositions that incorporate constructing and manipulating gardens with an emphasis of reimagining the future. I have found the majority of this exchange is through installation work and collaborations with science. The recent inaugural ARoS Triennial, *The Garden—End of Times; Beginning of Times* and - outside of art parameters, the UK educational charity *The Eden Project*[33] - are cases in point. These projects are huge, interactive multi-disciplinary endeavours. I would like to experiment, in collaboration with science, to develop a paint-like surface that has an active ingredient which will continue to grow, develop and change the imagery. This would be a slow and ongoing process, that I envisage as similar to lichens growing on rock. Also pivotal to the visual interplay would be the imagery's movement and evolution, rather than simply the viewer's subjective response.

The Contribution

The contribution of this research project is in offering of a new way of seeing garden imagery. This way of seeing is grounded within the experience, through image making and through the materiality of paint. It is not separate from gardens as sites, but instead is drawn from that experience. This new method of seeing offers a view that is within the garden, that is embedded, experiential and implicit in being both of the gardener and the maker – and that acknowledges the agency of the garden and the paint. This view lacks the fixity of perspective: it is open ended and transitional.

The focus of this new way of seeing garden imagery has not been on the grand vista, but rather on the ordinary transitional spaces, often overlooked however strangely familiar. Pivotal to this perspective is the space of in-between, the agency of the viewer in navigating the shifting

[33] http://www.edenproject.com/eden-story/about-us

perspectives. Embedded within this negotiation are moments of reprieve, pauses, and reverie, where the imagery is stripped back to essential gestures to offer resonances within the garden's elemental earthiness.

Oscillation

Not only has oscillation been deeply embedded in my methodological discussion; it has proved to be one of the research findings. In the theoretical context, oscillation is entrenched in the thresholds and shifts of power relations. In terms of the formal operations of the paintings, the pictorial and compositional structures have been deliberately manipulated to create an uncertainty in the viewing position, a suspension or hovering position. This lack of fixity has allowed otherness into the frame. Otherness as an overarching concept operates through a relationship to these things, whereas oscillation is very specific in its spatial and pictorial tensions. This power play between tensions is one of my pictorial accomplishments. I have constructed the garden as a site of indeterminacy, and the crux of this undertaking is the anticipation that the viewer has a sense of being in, and of, the garden as well as having to negotiate through it.

My contribution to the canon of garden imagery lies with a deliberate recoding of gender tropes. Rather than the fixed duality of the male/female binary, the gender binary is replaced by depicting power relations through oscillation; a toing and froing, non-fixed negotiation of spatial and pictorial operations. The gendering of space, and the oscillation upon which this gendering depends, I have augured, is all about form and its relationships. From a formalist approach this redefinition of oscillation is seen through figure/ground relationships, abstraction and figuration, real and imagined sites and the shifting between macro and micro perspectives. I have identified these binaries as the problem and the solution as a dissolution of the binaries by painting the garden as a site of indeterminacy. In these paintings, gender is redefined in the garden to be deeply aligned with the threshold of potentiality, fecundity and the regenerative nature of the soil. Unlike the Monet work, where the viewer was separated by the movement of the surface, here the surface of the painting is the surface of the dirt and you are not separated from it. This research offers a different way of viewing, and experiencing, such imagery.

The research has acknowledged, analysed and distilled the complex relationship we have with garden imagery, inclusive of the political, gendered and cultural, as well as the representational, imaginary and structural formats to form a weighty lexicon of visual tropes. These tropes and characteristics have been found in a range of historical and contemporary exemplars which we understand and recognise. What I have contributed to this field of knowledge is bringing all of these tropes together as a methodological framework. I take this framework and through my studio research I have been able to offer something new, which is an embeddedness of these tropes. My garden is a constant negotiation and dancing about between positions. It doesn't set up clear paths or boarded platforms, but offers a new vision. This vision is dank, it is fecund, and it is located in and of the garden.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Research Activities

Exhibition and Conference Participation:

2014

Unnatural Futures, 3-4 July 2014 Curated by Dr Yvette Watt as part of the Arts Environment Research Group, Unnatural Futures Conference, Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart.

New Makings – (n.d), Curated by Annie Geard and Dr Maria Kunda, Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart.

2015

New Makings – (n.d), Curated by Annie Geard and Dr Maria Kunda, UPSI Gallery, University Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjong Malim, Malaysia

Long Weekend, 20 May -6 June 2015, Curated by Josh Simpson, Trocadero Art Space, Footscray, Melbourne, Victoria.

Power, Paint and the Garden, 11 July – 12 July 2015, paper presentation at The International Academic Forum (IAFOR), Third European Conference on Arts & Humanities, Brighton, United Kingdom.

2016

Artbank Australia

2017

Not so Conservatorium, 8 April – 20 April, annual review exhibition, The Ramp Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart.

Appendix 2 – Studio Practice

All works are oil on Masonite.

Pandani 1, 2014
130 x 120 cm

Pandani 2, 2014
130 x 120 cm

Looking Back, 2015
80 x 80 cm

Just Looking, 2016
40 x 40 cm

This isn't Kansas anymore, 2016
60 x 60cm

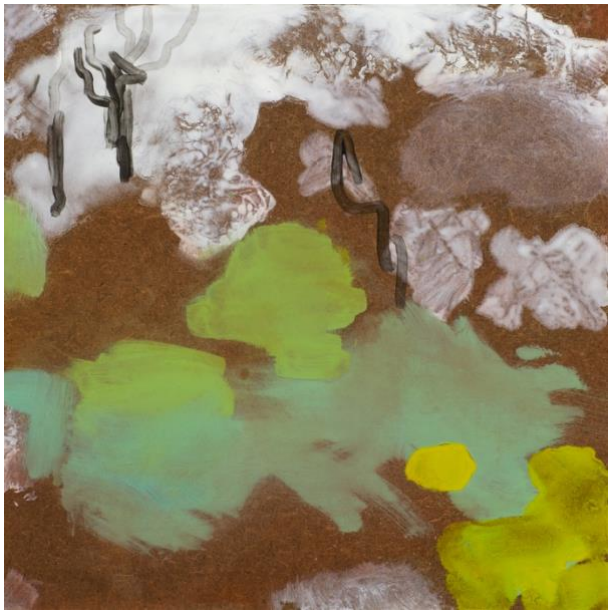
Weeds, 2015
40 x 40 cm

Kew Gardens No.1, 2015
40 x 40 cm

Kew Gardens No.2, 2015
75 x 75 cm

Tea Gardens (Nairobi), 2016
80 x 80 cm

Natural Folly, 2016
61 x 61 cm



Be Still, 2016
40 x 40cm

Not So Conservatorium, 2016
110 x 90 cm

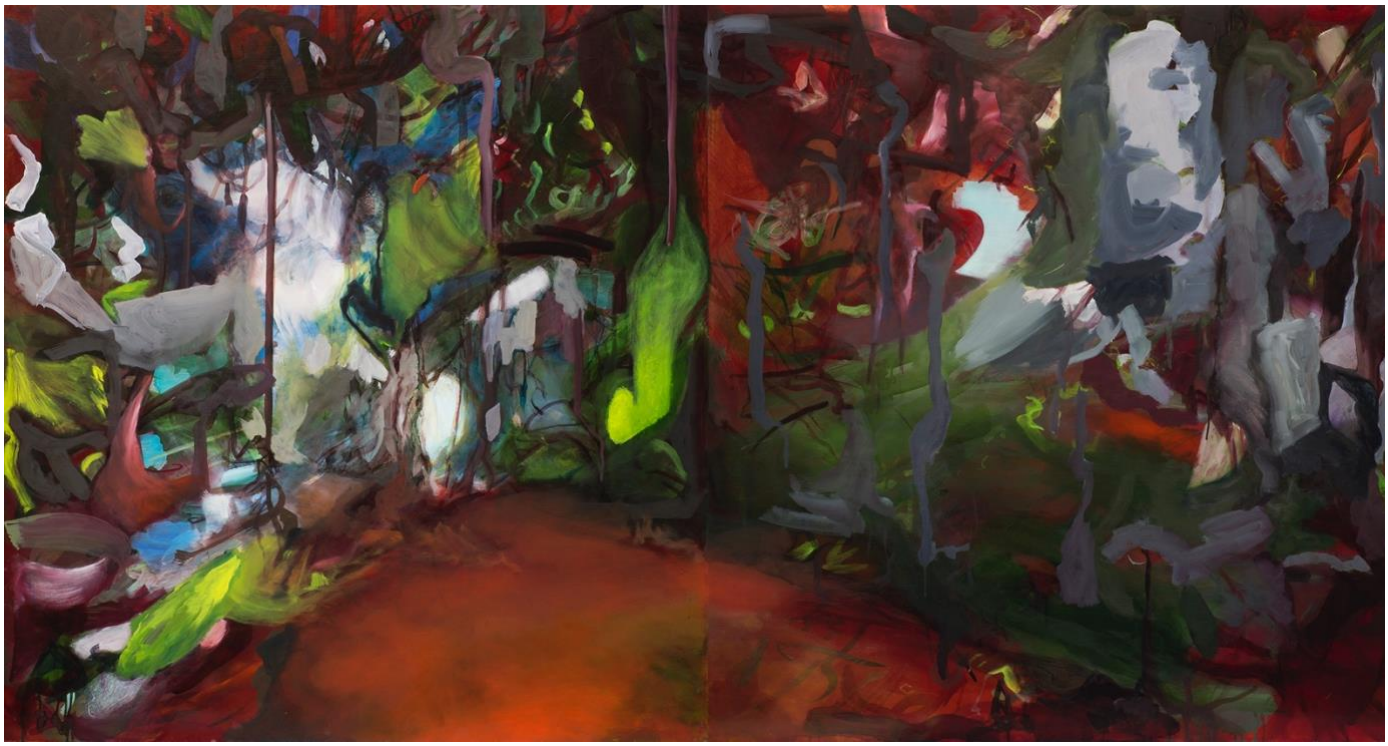
Pretty Conservatory, 2016
90 x 100 cm

Not Quite Conservatory, 2017
90 x 110 cm

I think it needs a bit of orange, 2016
90 x 100 cm

Hidden Garden; The Quarry (Government House TAS), 2016
120 x 150 cm

Just Swanning Around, 2016
120 x 150 cm



Kew, 2016
95 x 180 cm

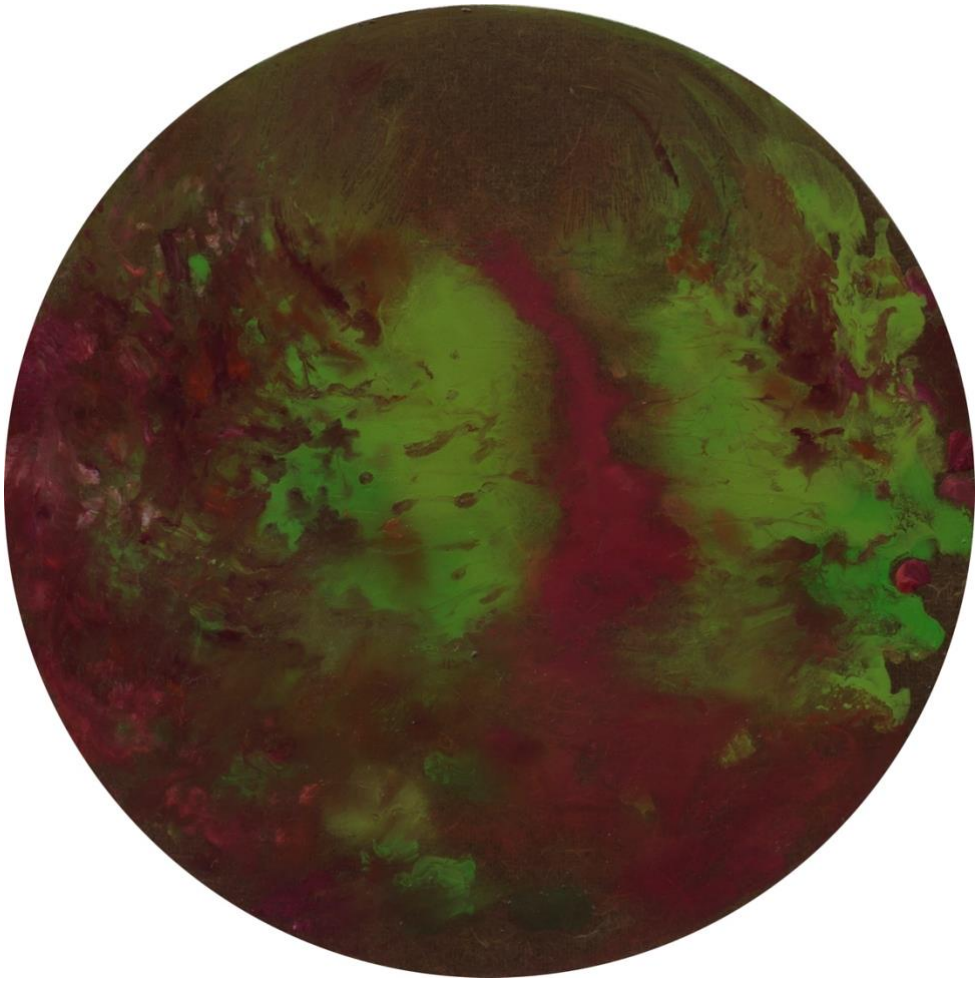
Ode to Jo (Waterlily House, Kew), 2016
121 x 335 cm (three panels)

Fanchon Focus, 2016
120 x 120 cm

Ode to Illawarra Flame Tree, 2017
60 x 60 cm

Spring (Everglades, Leura),
2017
121 x 112 cm

"Tis An Unweeded Garden" after Hamlet, 2017
112 x 121 cm

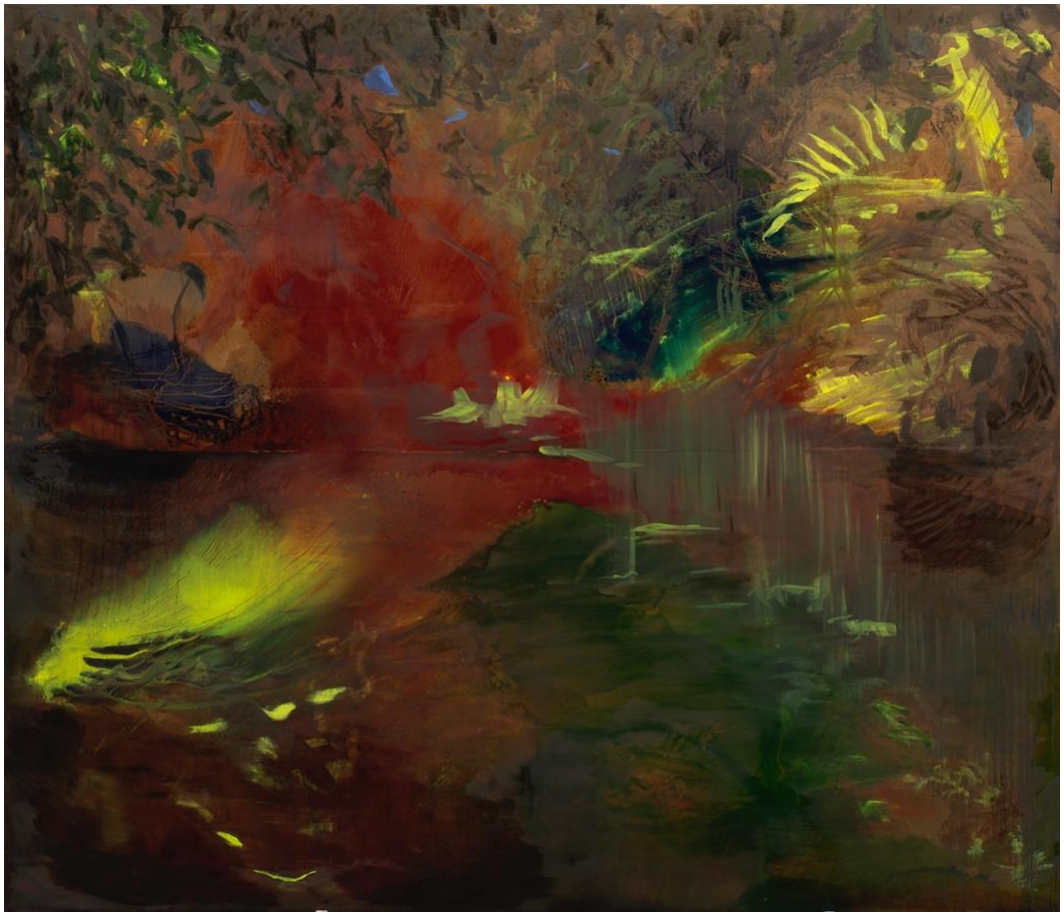


Clos Normand (Giverny France), 2014
30 x 30 cm

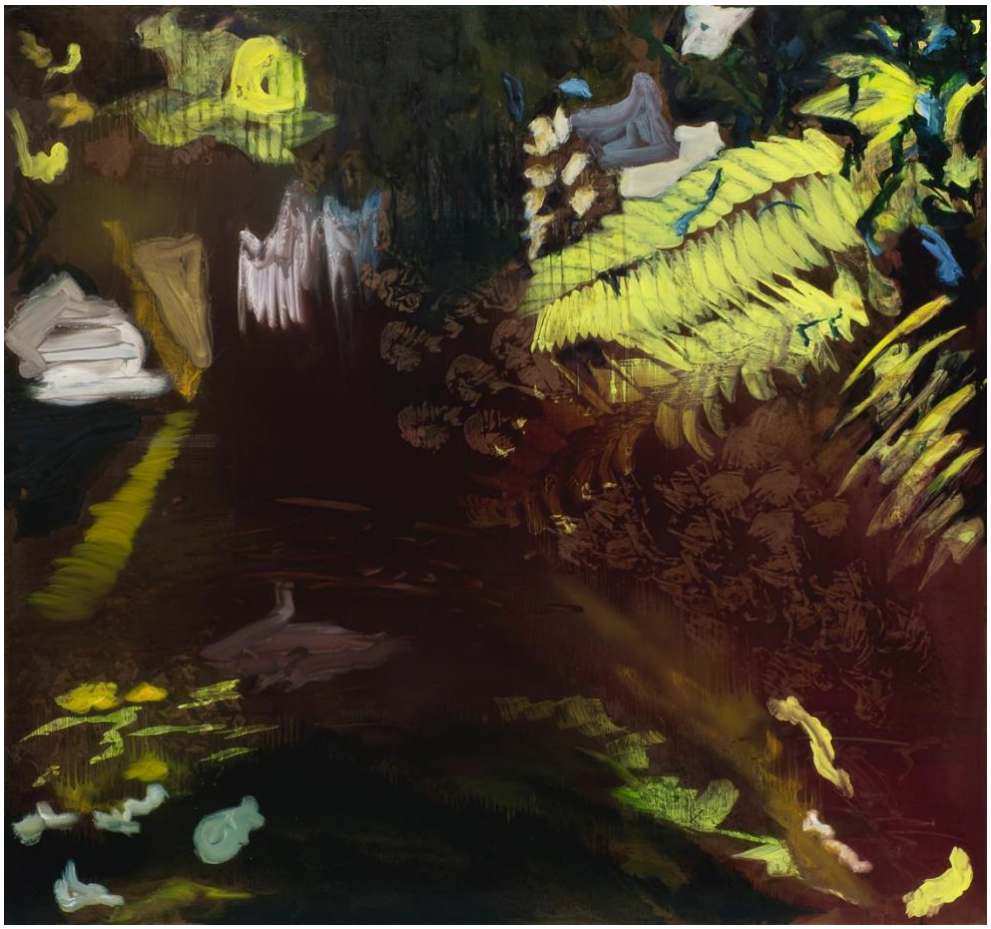
Pioneers Memorial Garden (Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney), 2017
121 x 112 cm

The Quarry Pond 3 (Government House TAS), 2017
90 x 100 cm

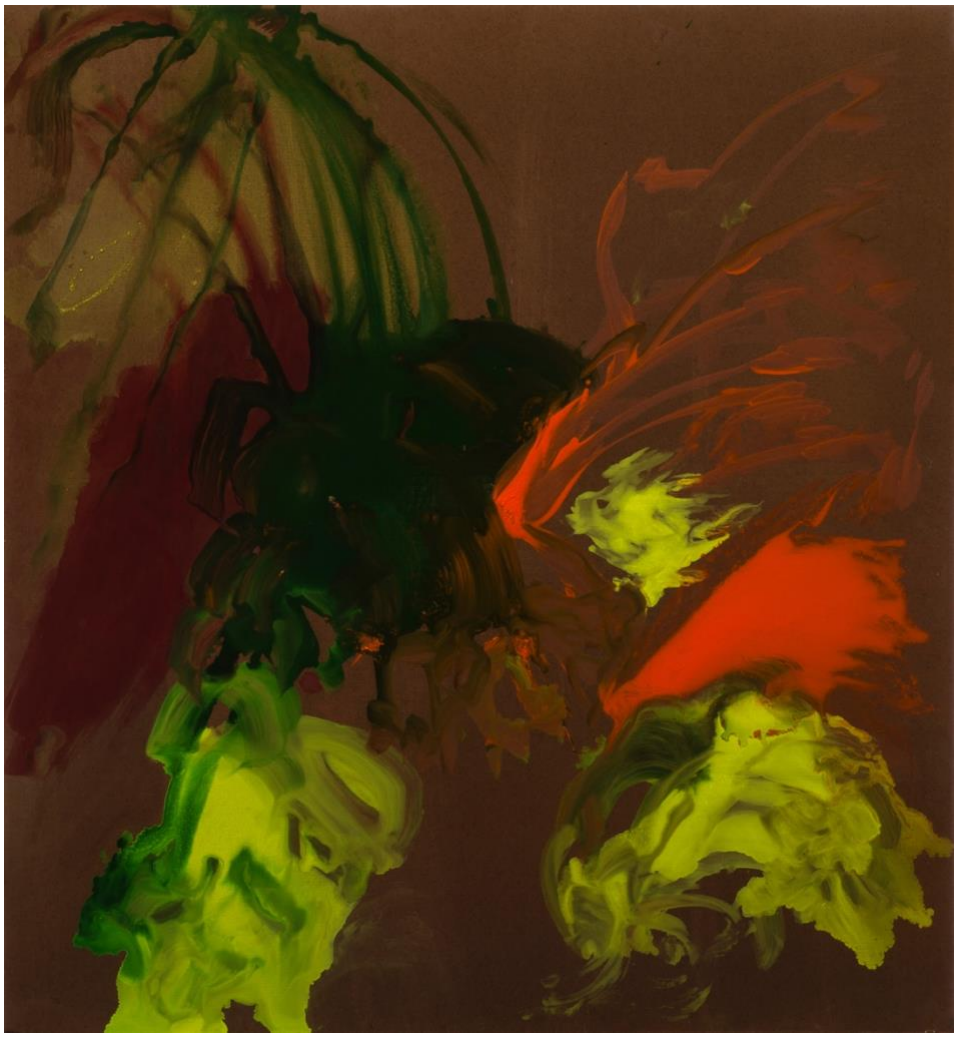
"The domesticated escapes and runs riot" after Mabey, 2017
112 x 121 cm



The Grotto Pool (Everglades, Leura), 2017
198 x 231 cm



The Grotto (Everglades, Leura), 2016
122 x 130 cm

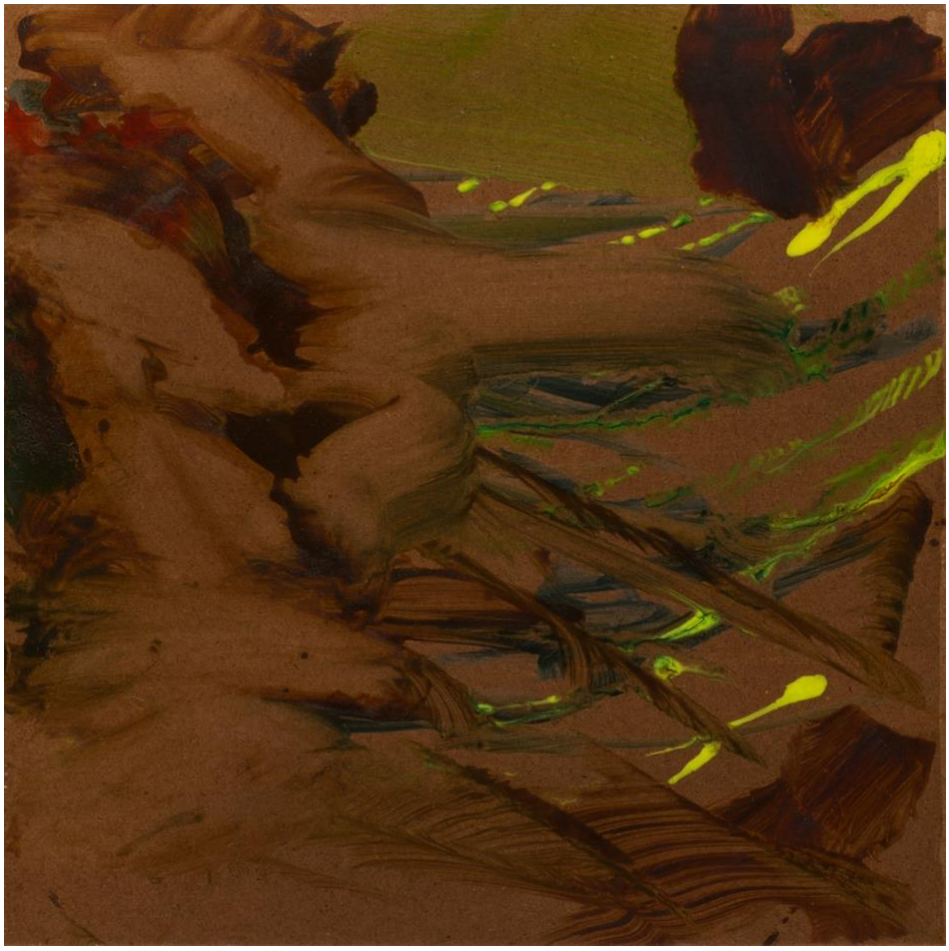


Scented, 2017
121 x 112 cm

The Quarry Pond 4 (Government House TAS), 2017
121 x 130 cm

"The wild gatecrashers" after Mabey, 2017
60 x 60 cm

The Quarry Pond 1 (Government House TAS), 2016
90 x 100 cm



Resonate, 2017
60 x 60 cm

Garden of Reverie, 2017
60 x 60 cm

Looking Back, 2015
80 x 80 cm

Jardin d'eau"
(Giverny France), 2017
45 x 45 cm

Appendix 3 – Examination Installation Images